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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

**FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**School of Education**

**Approaches to Criticality Development in English Literature  
Education: a Second Language Case Study in  
a Thai University**

by

**Pornrawee Thunnithet**

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

**ABSTRACT**

**FACULTY OF LAW, ARTS & SOCIAL SCIENCES  
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**APPROACHES TO CRITICALITY DEVELOPMENT IN ENGLISH  
LITERATURE EDUCATION: A SECOND LANGUAGE CASE STUDY IN  
A THAI UNIVERSITY**

This research was designed as an in-depth case study to explore the approaches Thai teachers of English literature in higher education utilise to foster criticality development in their students; the nature of students' criticality development; and the influence of the teaching and learning context on such development. It is based on the application of two theoretical frameworks: Barnett's (1997) framework of levels and domains for criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. Literary teaching theories were also adopted as part of the supportive framework for data analysis. A qualitative approach was used to integrate the data and methodology. The data from teacher interviews, classroom observations, documentary data and field notes were analysed using a theoretical proposition analysis strategy and the inductive analysis of data. The participants, a teacher and two students in an English literature class, were observed for four months and interviewed at the beginning and the end of the English literature unit provided in a public university in Thailand.

The findings revealed that Barnett and Bailin *et al.* were useful frameworks for analysing the criticality development of students in the literature classroom although with the need of some modifications and amendments. Criticality was conceptualised positively by the teacher and students. They perceived it as significant not only in the literary study, but also for any academic discipline and their everyday lives. There are several factors that encouraged such development, for example, students' learning habits, cooperativeness, open-mindedness, the influence of Buddhist doctrine, the assistance and encouragement from the teacher through her teaching approaches. The role of the teacher was also very significant for the students' criticality development. However, their criticality development was limited by various factors such as: some aspects of traditional Thai culture, values and characteristics; some characteristics of the learning and teaching environment; and some limitations on intellectual resources and language ability. Drawing from the findings, the study presents four areas of implications: (1) the conceptualisation of criticality development in the L2 literature classroom, (2) literature teaching practices in Thailand and elsewhere, (3) teaching policy in criticality development in higher education, (4) teacher education in criticality. All these implications will be useful for not only L2 literature study but also other disciplines in general.

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# **Declaration of Authorship**

I, ..... **Pornrawee Thunnithet**.....

declare that the thesis entitled

## **Approaches to Criticality Development in Literature Education: A Second Language Case Study in a Thai University**

and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this university;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.

**Signed:**

**Date:**

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*Critical persons are more than just critical thinkers. They are able critically to engage with the world and with themselves as well as with knowledge. It follows with that we have to displace critical thinking as a core concept of higher education with a more comprehensive concept. The concept that I am proposing is that of critical being, which embraces critical thinking, critical action and critical self reflection.*

Barnett (1997, p. 1)

## My beginning

My initial interest in this research emerged from being both a learner and teacher of English literature in a Thai university. My six-year teaching experience of three English literature courses for undergraduate students enabled me to realise the problems faced by Thai teachers in encouraging and developing Thai learners' critical thinking. I perceived that, especially in the field of English literature, it needed to be developed. The following personal story of literature teaching may illustrate these problems.

During the first year of teaching, in one of my poetry classes I asked the students to interpret the use of figurative language in a sonnet by Shakespeare. The whole class kept silent for a while, although I tried to guide them by giving some hints and using questions to lead to an answer. Finally, one student told to me that the poem was 'too far to reach'. I asked her to explain and she said that she meant the poem contained many issues which were not only too different from what she knew, but also very difficult for her to

comprehend. For example, she listed the English cultural background, the use of archaic vocabulary, the complex sentence patterns and, most of all, the use of the English language. She told me that if the poem had been written in Thai it would have been much easier for her to express her ideas and interpretations. I suddenly had questions in my mind about the students' restrictions that discouraged them from the practice and development of their critical thinking.

Apart from these problems, I suspected other issues of limiting the development of students' criticality, such as limited language proficiency, large class size, the teaching and learning environment, and assessment methods. In my university there are usually about forty to fifty students in a literature class, making it difficult for a teacher to encourage students to ask or answer questions, or even give informative feedback on their written assignments. Although the students who enrolled in English literature courses were English major students, their English was poor, so it was difficult for them to read and understand the texts and critically reflect in writing. These problems of large class size and limited language proficiency led to the choice of assessment methods. Some teachers chose a multiple choice format in place of composition, as they did not need to spend so much time marking the scripts or correcting the students' poor English. With this format, students' opportunities to practise and develop their critical thinking were further restricted.

From these problems, many issues concerning the students' development of critical thinking came into my mind. What was the perception and understanding of critical thinking in the students and teachers? Did they feel it was important? Did the teachers set the development of critical thinking as a goal in their courses? What were factors and resources necessary to foster critical thinking in the students? Did the teachers take any role in that development? Did Thai cultural values and characteristics have any influence on the students' practice of critical thinking in classes? My interest in exploring the nature and situation of students' development of critical thinking in this

type of situation, and in examining the teaching approaches that foster it, led to my research.

## **Criticality and higher education**

Critical thinking is one of the most widely discussed concepts in education and educational reform all over the world at present (Atkinson, 1997). It is considered one of the most essential skills for higher education, especially in this era of globalisation (Atkinson, 1997; Day, 2003; Kubota 1999). It is argued that critical thinking gives students the ability not only to understand what they have read or been shown, but also to build upon that knowledge with minimum guidance. It is argued that critical thinking teaches students that knowledge is not simply the ability to learn lessons without questioning, but provides the ability to think by themselves.

Many academic departments hope that their professors and instructors develop strategies to teach critical thinking and criticality, and identify appropriate areas in their courses to emphasise and teach critical thinking. Many attempts have been made by educators of various disciplines, including the study of literature, to employ teaching approaches in the curriculum which enhance criticality development. The ability to think critically is highly regarded in various fields of study, particularly in higher education, where students have to expand their knowledge and later apply it in their future career. Critical thinking was discussed among educators almost across the globe as one of the foundation skills for survival in a rapidly changing world, and providing the basis for the formation of education systems (Scheffler, 1989; Paul, 1995; Halpern, 2003). However, an understanding of criticality and critical thinking is still restricted. Its definition and conceptualisation are also problematic. What exactly is critical thinking? What do educators and teachers want their students to be or to have so that they are able to think critically?

There is an ongoing debate among educators on whether or not critical thinking is culturally specific and appropriate to instruction in non-Western countries such as Asia (Atkinson, 1997; Davidson, 1998; Kubota, 1999; Day, 2003; Long, 2003). There are also voices from some Western educators in schools or universities in Asian countries about the difficulties and problems of teaching critical thinking to Asian students (Davidson, 1998; Atkinson, 1997; Egege and Kutileh, 2004). While the implementation of critical thinking in education is widely praised and emphasised among educators and practitioners; according to my personal teaching experience, in practice students are still taught using approaches that encourage them to take a passive, rather than active role. This gives students a view of knowledge as something the teacher should pass on to them, rather than something they should discover by themselves. Black and Deci (2000) claim that students recognise knowledge as something passing back and forth, and never stop to think or ask themselves how this knowledge applies to the real world. These problematic issues initiated my inquiry into the existing conceptualisation and definition of critical thinking and criticality in higher education.

## **Literature and criticality**

Several scholars and researchers argue that literature is a subject which can enhance students' criticality as reading literature offers the potential for higher level thinking (Carter and Long, 1991; Showalter, 2003; August, 2004; Jaffar, 2004; Tutas, 2006). In the literature classroom, there is a requirement for many practices such as discussion, interpretation and problem-solving and all these will provide the starting point for developing thinking, learning and language skills. Moreover, it can be seen as a means to provide context for critical thinking and discussion on issues of importance, i.e. as a contribution to knowledge about culture. The students who study literature are supposed to develop their critical thinking skills and extend their experience by expressing their response to the texts they read. According to Tutas (2006), with the aim of becoming critical thinkers, the students have to "learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with

others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate" (p. 94). This raises questions about how teachers can incorporate the concept of criticality in their syllabi as well as exploit effective teaching approaches and pedagogical practice to facilitate the development of criticality processes in order to enable the most effective learning situation.

## **Thailand and educational reform**

In Thailand, critical thinking in students is considered a matter of great importance by the government. In order to keep up in a globally competitive world, it perceives criticality as a vital factor in the nation's development; however, the concept of criticality is foreign to Thai people in many ways. There are cultural tensions between preserving traditional Thai culture and promoting criticality in Thai citizens. Criticality is based on individuality, self-confidence and asking questions, while Thai culture is often based on conformity, harmony, collectivism and seniority. The tension results in practice in a challenge for the government over integration of criticality and dilemmas, particularly concerning the younger generation.

The government's concern was reflected in the Thai National Education Act, B.E. 2542 (1999), which described clearly the direction that Thai education should take. It proposed to expand the role of the teacher as information provider and addressed the notion of student-centred learning and teaching to help students to develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. The evidence can be seen in Section 24(2) of Chapter 4: National Education Guidelines, which states that:

in organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned should provide training in thinking processes, management, how to face various situations and how to apply knowledge to solving problems

Section 24(3) of the same chapter further states that:

in organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned shall organize activities for learners to draw from authentic experience; drill in practical work for complete mastery; enable learners to think critically and acquire the habit of reading and develop a continuous thirst for knowledge.

From the above statement, we can see that emphasis was placed on teacher-learner interaction to assist students in developing their critical thinking capacity. Dr Rung Kaewdang (no date), an education reformer in Thailand, also asserted that learning activities in Thai educational institutes should be changed from teacher-centred to those with a focus on learners. The idea that Thai students have to know how to think and how to solve problems is also emphasised by Kaewdang (no date).

Chanawongse (2001), Minister to Office of the Prime Minister and Deputy Chairman of the National Education Commission, in his opening address to the First International Forum on Education Reform: Experiences of Selected Countries, reaffirmed that the first among four main objectives of the National Education Act 1999 was:

to enhance learners' quality of life by enabling them to learn how to learn, to develop their ability for analytical and critical thinking, practical work, and solution to problems in their daily lives. They will thus become competent, good, and happy members of the society.

He further emphasised that the ultimate goal of the reform is to make the best use of Thai people's potential. This is because it is they who have to handle the demands of the knowledge-based economy in this era of globalisation and world of information and communication technology, and at the same time maintain their identity in the future. He argued that it is necessary to carry out educational reform so that the quality of education will be greatly improved, in keeping with the political and socio-economic changes in the current competitive society. Critical thinking in the sense of problem solving and learner-centredness is discussed widely in Thailand as one of the goals of

educational reform. The relevance of educational reform in Asian universities and the significance of critical thinking were echoed by Professor Richard Levin (2010), President of Yale University, in his lecture to The Royal Society in London. He stated that in order to be successful in the globalisation of higher education it is necessary for Asian universities to 'provide the ideal context for educating graduates for careers in science, industry, government, and civil society who have the intellectual breadth and critical thinking skills to solve problems, to innovate and to lead' (p. 6). I agree with Chanawongse (2001) and Levin (2010) over the necessity of critical thinking in Thai and Asian students. However, I also recognise that enhancing critical thinking in Thailand is not simple, due to many factors. Throughout the country it is a challenging task for educators and teachers to accomplish and one that is not straightforwardly beneficial.

## **Aims of the study**

In the context of Thai education and culture, it appears that for both teachers and students there is tension between attempts to promote criticality and the desire to preserve Thai culture. Therefore, it will be useful to explore these tensions as they play out in a university class in Thailand, and how criticality can be conceptualised in this situation. As part of this investigation, it is necessary to investigate perceptions and expectations of criticality among teachers and students in an English literature class to see how they experience criticality. Moreover, there is a need to examine the nature of criticality development in students and the significance of the teachers' role in fostering that development. Apart from that, it is necessary to study the impact of other aspects of the teaching and learning context in students' criticality development. All these lead to the main research questions for this study, as follows:

## **Research questions**

To fulfil the purposes of this study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature class?
2. How is criticality perceived by
  - a) teachers, and
  - b) students in an English literature class?
3. What is the nature of criticality development in students?
  - a) How is the criticality of the students developed?
  - b) What role do the teachers play in fostering students' criticality?
  - c) What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development?

In order to answer these research questions, in my study I have chosen a qualitative approach rooted in the interpretive paradigm as a means of gaining insight through discovering meanings by improving my comprehension of the whole.

## **Outline of the thesis**

This study is organised into nine chapters. The present chapter describes the background to the study, the aims of the study, the research questions and the way the thesis is organised.

Chapter Two will present a conceptualisation of critical thinking starting with a brief history of the concept of critical thinking. Existing relevant theoretical frameworks and research studies about critical thinking will be discussed and evaluated. The definitions and conceptions of critical thinking from scholars and researchers from various approaches to critical thinking will also be

provided in order to gain a clearer understanding of critical thinking. Additionally, there will be a discussion about the theoretical background to literature teaching and about the importance of critical thinking as an essential skill in literary studies according to the literature.

Chapter Three will provide an overview of Thai society in relation to its influence on criticality development. It will suggest three main factors which affect the development of criticality in Thai students: religion, Thai culture and values, and the Thai educational system. This chapter will conclude by discussing empirical studies related to the implementation of critical thinking in a Thai setting.

Chapter Four will provide a description and justification of the research paradigm, methodology and the theoretical framework. Topics discussed are the selection and recruitment of participants, and the methods of data collection and data analysis. The design and structure of interviews, the pilot study, the research site, research participants' backgrounds and ethical considerations will also be described.

Chapters Five to Seven will focus on the data gathered. Analysis of data will be based on the application of two main theoretical frameworks: Barnett's (1997) levels and domains for criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) conception of intellectual resources necessary to accomplish critical thinking. Literary teaching theories will also be adopted as part of the supportive framework for data analysis in this study. The data will also be analysed according to the emerging themes. Some questions concerning the two theoretical frameworks will be raised through the process of analysis. Chapter Five will present the analysis of the case study teacher from *English Literature II*. Chapters Six and Seven will present the data analysis for two case study students from the same course.

Chapter Eight provides a cross-case analysis of the three case studies. It will provide a synthesis and comparison of the cases in order to develop a holistic

picture of criticality development in literature classroom. The analysis will address the research questions.

The last chapter provides the conclusion of my research study. It will reflect on the contribution of the setting to research in the field. A number of limitations of the study together with recommendations and suggestions for future research will be provided in this chapter.

# **Chapter 2**

## **Conceptualisation of Critical Thinking and Literature Teaching**

### **Introduction**

My study examines criticality development in an English literature class in a Thai university. As a first step in this study, I will discuss conceptualisations of criticality and their contribution to the teaching of literature. This discussion addresses my first research question, '*How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature class?*'

In my research, the two terms, 'critical thinking' and 'criticality', have a related, but different meaning. In order to clarify their complexity, relationship and significance, it is necessary to distinguish these meanings early on. Thus, I will begin this chapter with a thorough discussion of these two terms. In the next section I will evaluate existing relevant theoretical frameworks and research on critical thinking in order to reach a more profound understanding and conceptualisation of criticality. Some important debates around the issue of criticality will be discussed. This section will be followed by discussions of conceptions of critical thinking according to three influential approaches in critical thinking: philosophical, psychological and educational approaches. The three approaches are not mutually exclusive, but build on one another through time and social contexts. These approaches have a useful contribution to make to the students' criticality development; however, they have some limitations. Therefore, I adopt two main theoretical frameworks

with regard to criticality, that is, Barnett's (1997) model of levels and domains for criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) resources to accomplish critical thinking. I will argue that these two frameworks may make a more comprehensive contribution to the conceptualisation of the criticality development of students in a literature class.

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of how criticality is conceptualised in a literature class, it is necessary to include a discussion on literature education's overall purposes, and its place in criticality. In order to address the holistic background of literature education, I will examine the aims and challenges of second language (L2) literature education and discuss how these differ from the first language (L1) literature education. I will argue that the differences are due to restricted experience of English literary texts, and limited English language and literary competence in the L2 students. I will then address the significance of literature education, both generally and in specific ESL contexts such as Thailand. I will argue that literary study provides an excellent environment for the development of criticality. This is because its content and characteristics provide the significant intellectual resources which students are expected to employ as they engage in the close reading and analysis of texts. I will discuss the three main L2 literature teaching models: the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model (Carter and Long, 1991), together with their associated teaching approaches (that is, the information-based approach, paraphrastic approach, language-based approach, stylistics approach, and reader-response) widely accepted by second language literature teachers. These teaching models are discussed as a basis for the examination of the teachers' roles and practices in fostering students' criticality in the literature class. I will argue that the mixture of teaching models is beneficial to students' criticality in the literature class.

In the last section, I will systematically relate these discussions on literature education and criticality back to the two main frameworks that I have mentioned, i.e. Barnett (1997) and Bailin *et al.* (1999). I will argue that the

students' criticality development may be fostered through the mixture of teaching approaches utilised by the teachers and relate these to Barnett and Bailin *et al.*'s work. In my view, criticality may be taught and developed through literary studies, unlike Huitt (1998), whom critical thinking is 'a complex activity' (p. 5). She suggests that we should not expect the application of any single teaching approach be adequate to develop this activity. I agree with Carr (1990), Hickey (1990) and Mertes (1991), who argue for the development of critical thinking by means of specific content. They propose that specific content, as in literary studies, might best develop and practice critical thinking. Thus, in order to achieve the levels and domains of criticality and become the 'critical beings' proposed by Barnett (1997), it is necessary for the students to acquire the intellectual resources for critical thinking suggested by Bailin *et al.* (1999).

## **Conceptualisations: critical thinking and criticality**

Despite widespread use of the term in education today, it is difficult to arrive at a definition of critical thinking. The adjective alone is often used interchangeably with 'higher-order', 'creative', 'divergent', 'evaluative' or 'analytical', 'reasoning' and 'problem-solving' (Walsh and Paul, 1988). We can see that this abundance of terms arises from the variety of concepts of what critical thought is like and how it works. Patrick (1986) associated a broad definition of critical thinking with the cognitive processes and strategies involved in decision making, problem solving, or inquiry.

Robert Ennis (1987), a philosopher who is 'one of the most famous contributors to the development of critical thinking tradition' (Fisher, 2001, p. 2), defines critical thinking as 'a practical reflective activity that has reasonable belief or action as its goal' (p. 10). According to Chaffee (1988), a professor of philosophy at The City University of New York where he has developed a program in Philosophy and Critical Thinking, critical thinking is 'our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully

examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding' (p. 29). For Halpern (1998, p. 5), an American psychologist and past-president of the American Psychological Association (APA), critical thinking is 'thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved, in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions'. Simply put, according to Ennis (1987) 'critical thinking is reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused upon the decision what to believe or do' (p. 18). For other scholars such as Patrick (1986), critical thinking, whether conceived broadly or narrowly, implies 'curiosity, scepticism, reflection, and rationality'. (p. 2) Fisher (2001, p. 5) defined it as 'a kind of evaluative thinking which involves both criticism and creative thinking. It is concerned with the quality of reasoning and argument which is used to support belief or action'. Thus, it is clear that critical thinking is contrasted with the unreflective thinking which happens when someone is trying to accept and reach a conclusion essentially without thinking about it. As stated by Patrick (1986), critical thinkers have a tendency to 'raise and explore questions about beliefs, claims, evidence, definitions, conclusions, and actions' (p. 2).

The existing understandings and diverse definitions of critical thinking as proposed by many researchers and educators are critiqued by Ronald Barnett, an educational philosopher. In Barnett's (1997) view, 'critical thinking is a defining concept of the Western university. Almost everyone is in favour of critical thinking, but we have no proper account of it.' (p. 2). He suggests that the model of critical thinking generally adopted by Western universities is limited – what he wants for the students in the twenty-first century is a 'critical being' who has full '*criticality*'. For Barnett (1997), the goal of study for higher education should not only be to encourage students to have profound knowledge about what they are learning, or to encourage them to learn about their world and learn about themselves, but to encourage them to develop themselves and contribute to their world. That is the meaning of '*criticality*' as defined by Barnett. He argues that the lack of attention to criticality weakens the stated objective of higher education systems to enable graduates to 'take on the world'. Thus, Barnett argues for the substitution of the notion of critical

thinking in higher education with a holistic concept of 'critical being' which describes a person who possesses full criticality (Creme, 1999). He calls for an education of the 'critical person' across three domains, i.e. academic knowledge, the self and the world of action. Barnett's conception will be thoroughly discussed in the following section.

### **Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality: levels, domains and critical being**

The first main theoretical framework for which this thesis argues is Barnett's (1997). This proposes a conceptualisation of criticality as summarised in Table 1. For Barnett, criticality provides a broader conceptualisation than critical thinking, and he sees it in terms of levels and domains.

As regards levels, we all begin by developing skills for questioning, gain an awareness of the standards of reasoning within disciplines, and work towards a wider ability to undertake critique by bringing new perspectives to bear. The three domains of criticality Barnett (1997, p. 117) identifies are 'formal knowledge (critical reason), the self (critical reflection) and the world (critical action)'. He argues that currently higher education concentrates rather narrowly on the domain of knowledge – and remains at the low level of critical skills rather than moving towards the higher level of critique. For him, the notion of critical thinking is in the realm of cognitive skills. In his model of criticality, the first and second levels in the domain of knowledge are of 'critical thinking' that he defines as 'a collection of cognitive skills, usually aimed at problem solving' (Jones, 2005, p. 341). Other literature from critical thinking scholars (McPeck, 1981; Ennis, 1987; Paul, 1995; Facione, 1996; Halpern, 1998) describes this type of critical thinking, where it 'is understood as a cognitive skill, and a process of evaluation with an orientation toward outcome' (Jones, 2005, p. 341).

		Domains		
	<i>Levels of criticality</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Self</i>	<i>World</i>
4	<b>Transformatory critique</b>	Knowledge critique	Reconstruction of self	Critique-in-action (collective reconstruction of the world)
3	<b>Refashioning of traditions</b>	Critical thought (malleable traditions of thought)	Development of self within traditions	Mutual understanding and development of traditions
2	<b>Reflexivity</b>	Critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding)	Self-reflection (reflection on one's own projects)	Reflective practice ('metacompetence', 'adaptability', 'flexibility')
1	<b>Critical skills</b>	Discipline-specific critical thinking skills	Self-monitoring to given standards and norms	Problem-solving (means end instrumentalism)
	<i>Forms of criticality</i>	<i>Critical reason</i>	<i>Critical self-reflection</i>	<i>Critical action</i>

**Table 1      The Barnett 'criticality' framework: levels, forms and domains of critical being (1997, p. 103)**

As a philosopher and educator, in his book, *Higher Education: A Critical Business* (1997), Barnett proposes a view of the critical role of higher education in the society. What he desires is for the students in future societies to become 'critical beings' with full 'criticality' which includes critical thinking, critical action, and critical self-reflection (Barnett, 1997). In his view, higher education in the present and the future should have a new aim as regards critical thinking development:

...we have to displace critical thinking as a core concept of higher education with a more comprehensive concept. The concept that I am proposing is that of critical being, which embraces critical thinking, critical action and critical self-reflection. (p. 1)

Living in a modern world requires everyone to be critical, not only with knowledge but also with themselves and the world, and it is higher education that should be responsible for this commitment. What Barnett aims for higher education is that it 'can be a key institution for bringing about something like a learning society in its fullest sense' (p. 167). It should be a place where

students are encouraged to critique ways of knowing and of acting in the world, rather than focusing narrowly on skills and what works. In order for students to reach the full range of criticality, Barnett proposes that higher education should provide three conditions:

Students have to be:

1. 'exposed to multiple discourses' (p. 167) within their programmes of study that are not just intellectual, but practical and experiential .
2. 'exposed to wider understanding, questioning and potential impact of (their) intellectual field' (p. 168). This can be accomplished by encouraging the students to engage with wider perspectives in the society at large as a part of the endeavour of their studies.
3. engaged with 'a committed orientation (on their part) to this form of life, because the willingness to see one's own world from other perspectives, the willingness to engage with them, the willingness to risk critiques... all this calls for heroic dispositions on the part of the students' (p. 169)

When these three conditions that Barnett proposes for higher education are related to literature education, it is clear that it is a discipline that fits well with all three and can facilitate students' becoming critical beings with full criticality. This is because, through literature, students can be 'exposed to multiple discourses' of languages and experience. As literature may be considered as life in miniature, through their reading students can 'engage with wider perspectives in the society at large'. Literature also provides the students with 'the willingness to see one's own world from other perspectives, the willingness to engage with them, the willingness to risk critiques'.

In my view, the various definitions of critical thinking presented by the aforementioned scholars are in some way inadequate. This is due to their lack of precise categorisation into domains and levels, as proposed in Barnett's framework, to conceptualise critical thinking. Neither is there any definition or conceptualisation of the resources necessary for individuals to achieve critical thinking. Barnett's definition and conceptualisation of criticality is distinctive

from the definitions of critical thinking provided by other scholars in the way he calls for an integration of criticality in the form of a ‘critical being’ who possesses the full range of critical knowledge, critical self-reflection, and critical action. In my view, just being ‘evaluative’ and becoming a ‘critical thinker’, as proposed by some scholars, is insufficient in the modern world; it is necessary for a student to become a ‘critical being’ through the integration of the three forms of criticality proposed by Barnett.

However, Barnett’s framework of criticality itself has some difficulties. For example, his ideas are quite abstract and difficult to implement. Moreover, his proposition of levels of criticality is slightly unclear, as he does not give an exact idea of how a person may attain the higher levels of the framework. His framework is not developmental; it is presented descriptively, which in itself is not helpful in education. It does not suggest methods or the intellectual resources that people will need in order to reach the higher levels of criticality. In my perspective, it is necessary to have an idea about the methods or resources that facilitate a person’s reaching each level and domain in his framework.

Consequently, in the following section another conceptualisation will be discussed which is a resource-based. In my view, intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking are both practical and useful as they potentially form the basis for development of critical thinking across all three domains of Barnett’s (1997) theoretical frameworks.

### **Bailin et al.’s (1999) intellectual resources needed to accomplish critical thinking**

Another framework for which I argue as the main theoretical framework in my study is that of Bailin *et al.* (1999). This focuses on the intellectual resources needed to accomplish critical thinking. According to this, it is necessary for anyone who wants to be a critical thinker to employ the intellectual resources

necessary for critical thinking to occur. The authors also mention the teaching approaches which assist the development of these resources. These are described as follows:

- 1. Background knowledge** – the understanding, knowledge or ability to find out knowledge about a particular issue. The depth of a person's background knowledge in a specific context determines the degree to which they can think critically about the context.
- 2. Knowledge of critical thinking standards in a particular field** – knowledge of the standards that preside over critical judgement. This is acquired by analysis of current critical thinking practices, but judgement must be used in their application to specific contexts.
- 3. Possession of critical concepts** – the ability to identify and make appropriate distinctions of some particular concepts such as definition, implication, argument and so on. Critical concepts are those that enable critical thinkers to differentiate between types of intellectual product such as argument or statement.
- 4. Heuristics or knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically** – strategies or procedures to think of counter-examples, or to make definitions, or to make a discussion on a particular issue with others. Critical thinkers require a repertoire of heuristic devices such as double checking something before accepting it as fact.
- 5. Certain habits of mind** – certain commitments, attitudes or habits of mind that dispose a person to think critically. These can be summarised as having 'critical spirit' and refer to attitude and values to which the critical thinker is committed, that is, respect for truth, open-mindedness, etc. (p. 290)

I consider this concept of resources useful, not only for the researcher but for teachers and students themselves to examine points of difficulty in students' critical thinking development and to scrutinise teachers' perception of development in their students. In order to provide the intellectual resources to

foster critical thinking in students, Bailin *et al.* propose three components in teaching critical thinking:

1. engaging students in dealing with tasks that call for reasoned judgement or assessment,
2. helping them develop intellectual resources for dealing with these tasks, and
3. providing an environment in which critical thinking is valued and where students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion (p. 299)

Although Bailin *et al.* did not relate their ideas of critical thinking directly to Barnett's framework of criticality, in my view it is clear that what they propose is aligned with all three domains in Barnett's framework. In the domain of formal knowledge, their ideas of background knowledge may be considered as useful resources and led students to four levels of criticality, i.e. discipline-specific critical thinking skills, critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding), critical thought, and knowledge critique.

Additionally, the five resources may also be relevant to the other two domains in Barnett's framework: the domain of self and action at all levels. The resources such as the knowledge of critical thinking standards in a particular field, knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind are applicable to critical self-reflection and critical action of an individual. For example, the students in the literature class who possess intellectual resources such as certain critical concepts or knowledge of critical thinking in their field of study will be able to practise their critical thinking, reflect what they have learned by using their open-mindedness or respect for truth, and later on perform critical actions.

After presenting the understanding of criticality, the literature in the field is reviewed. The next section will discuss conceptions of critical thinking according to three influential approaches to critical thinking: philosophical,

psychological and educational. I will discuss them within the framework of understanding offered by Barnett and adopted in this study.

## **Conceptualisations of critical thinking according to philosophical, psychological and educational approaches**

Critical thinking is not a new concept and indeed its long influence and history can be traced back 2,500 years to the teaching practice and vision of Socrates. Socrates established the importance of asking deep questions that probe profoundly into thinking before we accept ideas as worthy of belief (Paul, 1995; The Critical Thinking Community, 2002). Socrates' practice was followed by the critical thinking of Plato, Aristotle, and the Greek sceptics who all emphasised that there are some deeper realities that lie beneath what appears on the surface.

Later on, critical thinking became a practice developed and promoted by Western English speaking countries, particularly from the 1970s onwards. Then, during the 1980s critical thinking began to emerge prominently in the debates among educators regarding the future direction of education (Facione, Facione and Giancarlo, 2000). Despite a growing body of literature on critical thinking since ancient times, its definition and conceptualisation are still imprecise. This lack of unity in conceptualising critical thinking relates to the different perspectives from which various disciplines such as philosophy and psychology view critical thinking. While philosophers emphasise 'critical thinking', psychologists, on the other hand, focus on the notion of 'thinking skills' (Ab Kadir, 2007, p. 2). According to Reed (1998), philosophers have tended to focus on the nature and quality of the products of critical thinking, while psychologists have focused on the processes of cognition, the components and operations used to address academic and practical issues. Moreover, Reed further points out that cognitive and developmental

psychology has an empirical research base, while philosophy has focused on theorising and logical reasoning to reach conclusions.

This leads to the divergence of their conceptualisations. There are various understandings of critical thinking given by scholars from fields such as philosophy, psychology and education. There are overlaps between each field; however, it is necessary to divide them into these three areas for the convenience of categorisation. The following are some classic conceptualisations from the critical thinking tradition.

### **Philosophical approaches**

John Dewey, the American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer is widely regarded as the 'father' of the modern critical thinking tradition (Fisher, 2001). His conceptualisation of critical thinking stems from his notions of reflexive thinking and he briefly defines it as:

active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends. (Dewey, 1933, p.9)

In Dewey's view, a critical thinker is a person who 'thinks through for himself, raises questions himself, finds relevant information himself, etc. rather than learning in a largely passive way from someone else' (Dewey, 1933; cited in Fisher, 2001). In my view, what Dewey said paved the way to what Barnett proposed in his framework of criticality and can be seen as a ground to support Barnett's (1997) theoretical framework of 'Critical Being'. For Barnett, critical beings or critical persons are not just 'critical' in any one of the three domains: the domain of reason; self; and the world. However, they should go further than the realm of critical thinking to critical self-reflection, and finally to become 'critical beings' in their action on the world.

Ennis is another philosopher who proposed that 'critical thinking is reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe and do' (Ennis, 1985, p. 45). For Ennis, critical thinking is often conceptualised as 'suspended judgement', 'healthy skepticism', or 'reflective thought' (Mayer, 1986, p. 8). We can see that, like Dewey, Ennis also emphasises 'reflective thinking' as one component of critical thinking (Fung, no date, p. 8). Ennis also set the elements of critical thinking into fourteen dispositions in his 'taxonomy of critical dispositions and abilities' (Ennis, 1987):

1. Seek a clear statement of the thesis or question
2. Seek reasons
3. Try to be well informed
4. Use and mention credible sources
5. Take into account the total situation
6. Try to remain relevant to the main point
7. Keep in mind the original or basic concern
8. Look for alternatives
9. Be open-minded
10. Take a position (and change a position) when the evidence and reasons are sufficient to do so
11. Seek as much precision as the subject permits
12. Deal in an orderly manner with the parts of a complex whole
13. Use one's critical thinking abilities
14. Be sensitive to the feelings, level of knowledge, and degree of sophistication of others.

This taxonomy also identified the skills that critical thinking includes. For Ennis a thinking disposition is defined as a tendency to do something given certain conditions. He argues that the disposition has to be applied reflectively in order to qualify as a thinking disposition. This means that dispositions are not automatic, but should be practised in the appropriate conditions.

In my view, Ennis' conceptions of dispositions for critical thinking can be related to Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) five necessary intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. These five intellectual resources are comparable

to the fourteen dispositions proposed in Ennis' taxonomy. We can see that, for Bailin *et al.* and Ennis, critical thinking does not come automatically, but it can be classified into intellectual resources and critical dispositions. However, unlike Bailin *et al.*'s five intellectual resources, Ennis's conceptions of dispositions for critical thinking are more complicated (in what way) and more difficult to operationalise in a classroom. Compared to Barnett's framework for criticality, it is clear that Ennis's focus is on the formal knowledge which is the first domain in Barnett's framework for criticality. In term of levels, Ennis does not divide critical thinking into different levels as does Barnett. Additionally, the conceptions of dispositions for critical thinking that Ennis proposes are at the early levels of Barnett's framework.

Richard Paul (1995), a central figure in the critical thinking field, also proposes another philosophical view of critical thinking. For him,

Critical thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content or problem – in which the thinker improves the quality of his or her thinking by skilfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them.

(Paul, Fisher and Nosich, 1993, p. 4)

For Paul, it is not enough to perceive critical thinking as only a cognitive process, because, in his view, critical thinking is closely related to intellectual standards (Ab Kadir, 2007). Paul (1995) warned against the superficial appearance of critical thinking that he described as 'pseudo critical thinking' as opposed to critical thinking (p. 47). What Paul emphasises is a feature of critical thinking on which teachers and researchers in the field all agree, that is, 'thinking about one's thinking'. This feature is the only realistic way to develop one's critical thinking ability (Fisher, 2001). For Paul, it is not enough to merely engage in the process of critical thinking, but we should consciously aim to improve it by reference to some models of good thinking in that domain and the result should be that we can produce better thought, more reasonable beliefs and actions than ever. He believes that critical thinking means approaching issues from multiple perspectives and remaining open-minded in

order to understand points of view with which one disagrees. Paul stresses the significance of not only critical thinking skills but also dispositions. He contends that:

critical thinking is the crucial foundation for education because it is the essential foundation for adaptation to everyday personal, social and professional demands for the twenty-first century and thereafter.

(Paul, 1995, p. xi)

We can see that Paul's emphasis of critical thinking is not only on educational, but also personal and social aspects. It is related to Barnett's (1997) call for 'critical beings' who possess full integration of critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical reason. What Paul proposes also supports Bailin *et al.*'s framework (1999) in its proposition for 'possession of critical concepts' and 'certain habits of mind' as intellectual resources necessary for students in order to be critical.

McPeck (1981) has a different conception of critical thinking from that of Ennis and Paul. He argues that critical thinking cannot be a generalised skill because thinking critically cannot be achieved in isolation as the nature of skills and dispositions vary across different domains (McPeck, 1981, 1990). For him, critical thinking is more related to specific thinking skills with particular knowledge in certain fields (McPeck, 1981). McPeck (1981) proposes that:

... Thus, we may say of someone that he is a critical thinker about X if he has the propensity and skill to engage in X (be it mathematics, politics or mountain climbing) with reflexive scepticism. There is, moreover, no reason to believe that a person who thinks critically in one area will be able to do so in another. The transfer of training skills cannot be assumed of critical thinking but must be established in each case by means of empirical tests. (p. 7)

In his view, it is ‘impossible to conceive of critical thinking as a generalised skill’ (p. 5). His point is that critical thinking is domain specific and there is no general skill which can be called critical thinking. For him, there are no universal skills which can be applied in all fields. Thus, critical thinking is not transferable across disciplines and specific disciplines are the best way to improve critical thinking (Nieto and Saiz, 2008). His standpoint is opposed to Richard Paul’s (1985), as presented in his review entitled *McPeck’s Mistakes*. In this review, Paul argues that, ‘We need to base our model of the critical thinker not on the domain-bound individual with subject-specific skills but on the disciplined generalist.’ (p. 42). In Paul’s view, when students are familiar with logic and become skilful in using reasoning in one subject area, it is likely that they will use this skill in another area as well and that this thinking can be transferable across disciplines. For Paul, generic critical thinking is required in all knowledge and every discipline can be understood only through thinking as he states that ‘All the disciplines – mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geology, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, and so on – are modes of thought’ (p. 2). We can see that Paul perceives critical thinking as a set of generic skills which requires both cognitive and affective strategies. However, McPeck considers ‘traditional discipline-based education to be the most direct route, if not the *only* efficacious route, to teaching critical thinking’ (Kalman, 2002, p. 71).

McPeck’s view of critical thinking as domain specific is shared by Brookfield (1987), an American educationalist. However, Brookfield’s interest is different from that of McPeck as he pays more interest to general life critical thinking than disciplinary critical thinking that McPeck is interested in. Brookfield (2003) argues that critical thinking is ‘irrevocably context bound as it can only be understood, and its development gauged, within a specific context’ (p. 157). Initially, Brookfield conceptualises critical thinking as a two-fold activity of ‘identifying and challenging assumptions’ and ‘exploring and imagining alternatives’ (p. 229) in response to a contextually specific event drawn out by either positive or negative life events. He insists that in order to be critical thinkers, students have to be conscious of the assumptions by which they

think and act, pay attention to context, be sceptical and be open to possible ways of looking at and performing in the world.

Apart from his emphasis on the idea of context boundedness in critical thinking, Brookfield's (1987) definition of critical thinking also puts emphasis on its importance in everyday life. He proposes that critical thinking is considered fundamental in personal relationships, in the workplace, and for maintaining a democratic world (Brookfield, 1987). The emphasis of Brookfield on the importance of critical thinking in everyday life echoes what Barnett (1997) proposes in his framework of criticality specifically on the notion of the critical being who integrates the full series of domains that is reason, self and the world, and over a range of levels. Brookfield works mainly in Barnett's domain of knowledge rather than in the other two domains. He also does not mention the different levels of critical thinking as proposed by Barnett.

The idea of *critical thinking as domain specific* proposed by McPeck and the idea of *context boundedness in critical thinking* proposed by Brookfield directs me to the justification in conducting this study about the development of criticality in a literature discipline in the Thai context. What I would like to examine is how criticality is developed in a specific discipline like literature; in which domains and to which levels as proposed by Barnett (1997) students' criticality in the literature classroom may be developed; in what way the development occurs; and how the characteristics of the development potentially differs from other disciplines. Furthermore, my interest goes directly to the specific context of the study that is the Thai context. I would like to know whether the Thai context plays any significance role to such development in the specific discipline of literature. Apart from that, I also would like to explore whether there are any additional resources specifically needed for Thai students to accomplish their critical thinking as proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework of intellectual resources needed to achieve critical thinking.

Brookfield (1987) classifies five aspects and four components of critical thinking (pp. 5-9):

1. Critical thinking is a productive and positive activity.
2. Critical thinking is a process, not an outcome.
3. Manifestations of critical thinking vary according to the contexts in which it occurs.
4. Critical thinking is triggered by positive as well as negative events.
5. Critical thinking is emotive as well as rational.

We can see that, for Brookfield, critical thinking is *a process* not an outcome. It is about the process of how to think, not what to think. Apart from that, he also points out the four characteristics that someone has to possess in order to be a critical thinker:

1. Identifying and challenging assumptions
2. Challenging the importance of context
3. Trying to imagine and explore alternatives
4. Reflective skepticism (pp. 7-9)

Interestingly, however, this point seems to be contrasted to Bailin *et al.* (1999, p. 287) who argue that 'critical thinking cannot be adequately described in terms of the use of specific mental processes'. Instead, they state that 'critical thinking must be described in term of adequately accomplishing certain intellectual tasks' (p. 287). We can see that, in their view, conceptualising the critical thinker in terms of mental or psychological processes and capacities should be avoided as they state that 'it is the quality of the thinking, not the process of thinking, which distinguishes critical from uncritical thinking' (Bailin *et al.*, 1999, p. 288). What they focus on are the things that the critical thinker will be able to accomplish. For them, the outcome of critical thinking is much more emphasised than the process.

For me, critical thinking is a matter of both the process and the outcome. In order to reach the outcome of being critical and to become a 'critical being'

according to Barnett's expectations, it is necessary for students to achieve sufficient intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking as proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999). The students have to be in the process of acquiring the necessary resources through the effective teaching approaches of the teacher in the classroom plus other factors such as the procedure of critical thinking and teaching and learning context before being able to reach the levels and domains of criticality proposed by Barnett.

I argue that, according to Bailin *et al.* (1999), students can develop resources in any order according to their individual capacity and their teaching and learning context. For example, certain teaching approaches will encourage the development of resources, or a focus on students' knowledge of strategies useful to thinking critically will encourage students' habits of mind in thinking critically. This conception of Bailin *et al.* is in accordance with that of Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality which proposed that the emergence of criticality in his framework is also not part of a developmental process, which means there is no need for students to achieve each level or each domain in the framework, step by step.

## **Psychological approaches**

### **Developmental psychology**

The work of Jean Piaget, an experimenter and theorist in the field of developmental psychology and in the study of human intelligence has been a major influence on the concept of critical thinking development among educators (Aguirre, 1997). In his theory, Piaget focuses on intellectual development as a hierarchical and developmental process in children. The experiments of Piaget reveal that as children grow their ability to perform various mental tasks progressively develops. These observations became the foundation of developmental psychology, and led to a widespread assumption that 'thinking consists of a hierarchy of cognitive skills' (Aguirre, 1997, p. 2).

Piaget's developmental stages focus particularly on children; however, adults perhaps also have developmental stages in the same way.

Piaget's theory is often contrasted with the view of Lev Vygotsky (1962, 1978), a pioneering psychologist has. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays an essential role in the development of cognition (Vygotsky, 1978) and that language plays a central role in cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1962). In his theoretical view of social cognition learning, culture plays a major function in individual development. Individuals have their own personal experience, background and culture, and these are influential to their learning development. For Vygotsky, culture teaches children not only what to think but also how to think (Doolittle, 1997). He believes that the interrelationship of language tools that develop from a culture such as speech and writing which children develop initially to use as ways of communication, together with the application of culture will lead to critical thinking skills. In Vygotsky's view, language is the tool for determining the ways a child learns 'how' to think as it is only through words that a child will be able to communicate complex ideas. Thus it is clear that the role of language is very important for students in the classroom. Literature is a discipline that can provide excellent examples of authentic language use and stimulates discussion in which students can practise communication. It can also provide students with an opportunity to use their cognitive and critical thinking while developing their language abilities. However, with limited competences in the language, it is likely to be difficult for students to give responses or be critical in the classroom when they can hardly say anything and do not understand what is being said to them.

Vygotsky puts emphasis on the developmental process of higher level thinking and problem solving in education. The students' process of thinking will be challenged to create new knowledge when they are encouraged to use critical thinking in certain situations. I agree with Vygotsky in his standpoint that learning processes lead to cognitive development, as learning will always lead to the development of higher levels of thinking and new knowledge.

Vygotsky (1978) maintained that 'learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organised, specifically human, psychological functions' (p. 90).

Another aspect of Vygotsky's theory in relation to the role of social interaction is the idea of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) which is a level of development achieved when children engage in social behaviour. According to Vygotsky (1978), full social interaction relates to full development of the ZPD which he defines as:

the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peer[s] (pp. 85-86)

This means that with appropriate assistance from teachers and collaboration from their peers, students can reach higher performance levels and then cope with tasks which are difficult for them to complete on their own. The ZPD is likely to be effective when applied in combination with the use of 'scaffolding' (Chang, Chen and Sung, 2002), defined as the 'role of teachers and others in supporting the learner's development and providing support structures to get to that next stage or level' (Raymond, 2000, p. 176).

Scaffolding is not only efficient in creating immediate results in learning, but likely also to encourage the critical thinking skills required for problem solving or decision making in the future. In scaffolding instruction, a teacher provides support to facilitate the learner's development and this scaffold will assist the learners' ability to build on background knowledge and internalise new information, leading to the gradual building up of knowledge and critical thinking skills. According to Chang, Chen and Sung (2002), the scaffolds provided by the teachers are temporary. The scaffolding by the teachers is withdrawn when the learners' abilities increase and finally the learners are able to independently acquire the knowledge or complete the tasks. We can see that enabling the students to become independent and self-adaptable

learners and problem solvers are the goals of the teachers when using scaffolding (Hartman, 2002). The application of ZPD and scaffolding proposed by Vygotsky is clearly related to Bailin *et al.* in their proposition for the five intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking (see p. 19) and the three components in teaching critical thinking (see p. 20). With the teacher's use of scaffolding in class, students would potentially be equipped with intellectual resources together with teaching and learning tasks and an environment that encourages critical thinking in class. Accordingly, after attaining these new resources and knowledge, the students could be led to the development of higher levels of thinking and finally become 'critical beings' as proposed in Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality.

### **Cognitive and metacognitive psychology**

According to Huitt (2006), cognitive psychology asserts various viewpoints and emphases which are influential in educators' thinking about how to improve the teaching and learning process. Cognitive psychologists state that critical thinking involves both *cognitive* and *metacognitive* elements (Kanaoka, 1999).

*Cognitive* skills are the basic mental abilities that are used to think, study, and learn. They consist of the variety of mental processes such as reasoning, analysing, and recalling information from memory. They are skills used to encode data, transform, organise, integrate, categorise, store and retrieve them (Hanley, 1995). Cognitive skill strength and efficiency are associated directly with students' ability to learn.

*Metacognitive* skills are skills in 'monitoring and controlling one's own mental processes and states of knowledge' (Kanaoka, 1999, p. 2). According to Tempelar (2006) critical thinking has also been referred to as metacognition or the process of 'thinking about thinking' (cited in Snyder and Snyder, 2008, p. 90). Metacognition is also identified by King (1995) as 'the awareness, monitoring, and control of one's cognitive processes' (p. 16). She elaborates

examples of metacognition such as the awareness of the purpose of a task, monitoring one's attention in a lecture, selecting specific learning strategies to use, monitoring one's progress toward a goal, identifying mistakes, and monitoring one's understanding.

According to Kanaoka (1999), despite the theoretical difference between cognition and metacognition, the two concepts are interrelated in the way that the cognitive process of critical thinking is recursive. An example can be seen in a situation when students discover a problem, make an inference, reach conclusions and then apply their cognitive skills to their own conclusion to solve the problem and finally reach their goal. Underwood and Wald (1995) point out that, in this situation, critical thinking, knowledge, and skill are all interdependent. Kanaoka (1999) concludes that those activities that Hanley (1995) calls 'cognitive' often have a metacognitive aspect as well. Thus, we can see that it is necessary for the students to gain background knowledge and possess some critical concepts about the topic they are going to study. This will enable them to achieve the full cognition and metacognition essential in performing their criticality later on.

### **Educational approaches**

The concept of cognitive skill was developed and popularised by Benjamin Bloom, an educational psychologist, and his colleagues through their introduction of the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in 1956. In their taxonomy, Bloom *et al.* clearly discuss the idea of a hierarchy of cognitive skills in adult. Forehand (2005) points out that the skill levels have often been illustrated as 'a stairway', influencing many teachers to encourage their students to 'climb to a higher (level of) thought' (p. 2). According to UW Teaching Academy (2003), Bloom's taxonomy is 'hierarchical; [in that] each level is subsumed by the higher levels. In other words, a student functioning at the 'application' level has also mastered the material at the 'knowledge' and 'comprehension' levels.'

In Bloom *et al.*'s (1956) taxonomy, the highest level is **evaluation**: the ability to judge the value of material against stated criteria. Learning outcomes in this area requires reviewing and asserting facts, ideas, and evidence, then making proper judgments and statements. Next is **synthesis**: the ability to put parts together or separate ideas to form a new whole or to establish new relationships. This level places emphasis on putting ideas and knowledge together to create a new and distinctive form. **Analysis** is the next area of the taxonomy. It suggests separating items into component parts and showing relationships between them. In this area, learning outcomes stress the ability to classify, categorise, discriminate or detect information. It also means breaking apart information and ideas into their component parts. The later level in the hierarchy is **application**, which refers to the ability to solve problems by using the knowledge they comprehended. Then, it comes to the lowest level in the cognitive domain i.e. **comprehension**: the ability to comprehend the meaning of material by comparing, interpreting, giving description and stating main ideas. The latest level of the taxonomy is **knowledge** which is defined as the remembering of previously learned material.

For Bloom *et al.* (1956), the term 'critical thinking' is synonymous with 'evaluation' (Davis, 1985). It is the highest level of six thinking skills proposed in Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive goals of education. For Bloom, the ability to evaluate is fundamental to critical thinking, and the process of evaluation involves developing and using criteria of judgment. However, my view diverges from Bloom in the way he defined critical thinking as being synonymous with evaluation, a narrow view compared to Barnett's conceptualisation of criticality. In my view, critical thinking does not end at the ability to evaluate, but it should go beyond that. In order to possess critical thinking ability, one should not only be able to evaluate some certain ideas, but should also reflect their thought and ideas comprehensively and become a 'critical being' as proposed by Barnett. What I am interested in my study is the wider notion of the development of criticality in the literature classroom

instead of the specific and narrower concern of development of students' critical thinking skills in literature teaching.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, from all the above-mentioned frameworks and the model of critical thinking, I perceive that the model of intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999) and the model of criticality proposed by Barnett (1997) are the most beneficial to my research study. In order to be a 'critical being' with a full range of criticality, it is necessary for the students to possess sufficient intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking development. After developing some necessary resources, students need to be encouraged to perform and reflect on their knowledge and understanding and then to engage in critical action as well as critical reasoning. As critical beings, 'students' bodies and souls, minds and spirits should be fully engaged in dealing with the problems of the world' (Skelton, 1999, p. 130). According to Creme (1999), an essential idea of Barnett's model is that 'the critical person is not just 'critical' in any one domain, but, necessarily, in all of them, in an integrated way' (p. 463). She further states that, in order to foster a critical person, it is necessary for higher education to allow and encourage the student to experience and take action in the world in a new way. In Creme's view, an education for criticality could change perception of the learners and also go beyond that by encouraging them to be 'reflexive' by engaging with new knowledge seriously and actively, allowing them to see and relate to the world in a different way.

## **Criticality in literature education**

In this section, I will discuss the significance of literature education both in first language (L1) and second language (L2) higher education contexts, like Thailand and some other Asian countries since they share some similar characteristics such as cultures, values, religious belief, languages and so on. In addition I would like to examine the teaching approaches in literature

education that seem likely to come closest to fostering criticality development in the students, specifically in the Thai context.

Promoting critical thinking skills in the literature classroom has become an increasing concern in many educational institutions in many countries. Reading literature also offers the potential for developing higher level thinking. This idea is supported by Lazere (1987) who claims that literature can be considered one of many academic disciplines that can come closest to embracing the full range of qualities engaged with critical thinking. (p. 3). He further states that this is because literature study involves the capacities to:

unify and make connections in one's experience; to follow an extended line of thought through propositional, thematic, or symbolic development; to engage in mature moral reasoning and to form judgments of quality and taste; to be attuned to skepticism and irony; and to be perceptive of ambiguity, relativity of viewpoint, and multiple dimensions of form and meaning (literal and figurative language) syntactic and structural complexity and so on. (p. 3)

Many educators and researchers such as Oster (1989) support this idea. She argues that 'literature enlarges students' vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways a situation can be' (p. 85). She further states that in international classes this characteristic of literature is especially significant as those students are often unfamiliar with the practice of critical thinking in reading, question and analysing texts. Through reading literary texts, learners can get deeper knowledge about a range of cultures and other useful insights that can broaden their worldview and foster critical ideas (Sidhu, 2003). This view is echoed by Jaffar (2004) who states that students of literature are expected to think critically and apply their critical and analytical skills to the texts they study. She claims that 'critical thinking cannot be separated from critical reading [of literature]. It monitors the reading process, assumptions are made and rejected and perspectives formulated' (p. 17). In her view, critical thinking and critical reading always come together. Good readers bring their own understanding to the text and add to its dimension and this leads to the process of critical thinking development later

on. Alderson and Short (1989) support this view by stating that literature is an excellent stage to practise critical thought as it has 'meaning potential' (p. 72) which is often highly self-referential and dense in meaning. Thus, literature education can offer an effective way to develop criticality in the learners.

Langer (2000), an expert in literature teaching, states that:

meaning is derived from the relationship between the text, the context in which it was produced and the experience of life and literature the reader brings to the texts. Accordingly, the study of literature which covers texts that vary in form and range from past to contemporary social and cultural contexts will enable students to learn to understand that texts are constructions, to consider the complexity of language and to recognise the influence of contexts and form. (p. 607)

Thus, the study of literature supports autonomous and critical thinking in the analytical and creative responses of the students to the texts. All these skills will be beneficial to students for their future lives both inside and outside academic study.

I will argue that criticality could be fostered through the application of an influential tool like literature as it offers students a valuable chance to actively engage in texts while considering their ideas, values, and ethical questions. Literature is one of the subjects that enable students an opportunity to learn to read personally, actively, and deeply (Sweet 1993) and this will be effective in the development of their metacognitive skills, an essential element of criticality.

Critical thinking involves the use of different cognitive skills, which do not come automatically and have to be taught and developed (Jaffar, 2004, p. 15). This idea is echoed by Paul (1985) who asserts that a setting that provides the exchange of opposing views is essential to the practice and development of critical thinking. Such a setting is found in every great work of

literature as it engages the reader in critical dialogue with its author, language, characters, and in the dynamic interaction (Walsh and Paul, 1988).

Young (1996) discusses the use of literary text to introduce critical thinking to college students. He believes that:

stories have two crucial advantages over traditional content: First, because they are entertaining, students' pervasive apprehension is reduced, and they learn from the beginning that critical thinking is natural, familiar, and sometimes even fun. Second, the stories put issues of critical thinking in an easily remembered context. (p. 90)

Howie also (1993) supports the use of literature such as short stories to teach critical thinking. He mentions that it is the responsibility of the teachers to facilitate the students to develop cognitive skills while reading literature. In the literature classroom it is necessary for everyone to 'make judgments, be decisive, come to conclusions, synthesize information, organize, evaluate, predict and apply knowledge' and all these practices could help develop their critical thinking skills (p. 24).

The usefulness of the study of literary texts is echoed in Muyskens (1983) as he states that it may be utilised for the 'development of knowledge of world literature, practice in reading and discussing creative work, and the introduction of literary concepts, genres, and terminologies, that is, recognition of figures of speech, levels of meaning, and other stylistic features' (p. 413). Moreover, it will also provide the students with an opportunity to gain insight into literature by entering a world with which they are familiar or unfamiliar due to the cultural aspects of stories, and to find a new idea or meaning from the exploration of the literary text they are dealing with (Erkaya, 2005).

According to Oster (1989), the attentive process in reading literature leads to critical thinking. She states clearly that 'focusing on point of view in literature enlarges student's vision and fosters critical thinking by dramatizing the various ways a situation can be seen' (p. 85). Thus, students become more

creative and critical as they have a chance to see various points of view; the characters' in the story and those of their peers from the class discussion, and this will also lead to the development of critical thinking. Oster's view is supported by Jaffar (2004), who states that literary studies encourage the learners to explore new possibilities as complexity and depth of their understanding increases. Jaffar argues for critical thinking as 'an important area of teaching as it helps students become self-motivated and autonomous learners who can apply their acquired modes of inquiry both inside and outside [the] classroom situation' (p. 15).

Jaffar further argues that in order to train students in critical thinking, it is necessary to create an active classroom environment where students are encouraged to discuss different points of view, consider a variety of perspectives and try to analyse how different aspects of a literary text fit in with each other to create a design of its own. What Jaffar argues is supported by Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) proposition of the component in teaching critical thinking which they call for 'an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion' (p. 299). In this kind of environment, students will learn not to say anything without evidence from the text when they approached literature from a problem-solving attitude. Instead, they learn how to use this evidence to support their point of view. They can learn to value their thinking process and to explore their own understanding. This practice also relates to Barnett's (1997) emphasis on the link between the three different domains i.e. the formal knowledge, the self and the world. From the reading and merging themselves with the stories, students can practise their knowledge and reason, reflect and then perform an action in their real life. This practice corresponds to Barnett's notion of 'critical being' as including thinking, self-reflection and action: 'Critical persons are more than just critical thinkers. They are able critically to engage with the world and with themselves as well as with knowledge' (1997, p. 1).

## **Literature education and its place in critical thinking for first language (L1) and second language (L2) learners**

According to Elaine Showalter (2003), the objectives in teaching literature is 'to train our students to think, read, analyse, and write like literary scholars, to approach literary problems as trained specialists in the field do, to learn a literary methodology, in short, to "do" literature as scientists "do" science' (p.25). However, in practice, due to their different language competence, personal and cultural backgrounds, it is apparent that the teaching approaches to accomplish these objectives have to be carried out in a different way for L1 and L2 literature learners.

### **Literature education for L1 learners**

According to Lazar (1993), the teaching practices for L1 literature have been enriched by developments in the field of critical theory such as New Criticism, structuralism, deconstructionism, feminism, psychoanalysis and so on. These branches of critical theory have been challenging the way we read and understand literature.

In her study, Kaowiwattanakul (2008) noted that L1 students are ready for a theoretical approach to literature teaching as they develop a basic personal appreciation of literature in their early years of study before university. This is because L1 readers naturally acquire English language competence and this can facilitate their understanding of the literary text they are dealing with. Without difficulties in language or reading comprehension for literary text like L2 students, L1 students can gain a basic personal appreciation of literature by themselves. Then, when L1 students come to the university, they are ready for a more theoretical approach in literature study. What they want from a literature classroom may be other abilities such as analytical or critical thinking when they engage with literary texts and literary concepts in a systematic and critical way.

From a pedagogic perspective, Showalter (2003), in her *Teaching Literature*, proposes three main theories that can be applied in the practice of teaching literature as follows:

1. *Subject-centered theories* emphasize content and information, often presented as the 'correct' answer.
2. *Teacher-centered theories* focus on what the teacher must do or be, in order to facilitate education and emulation.
3. *Student-centered theories* focus on the way people learn, and the organization of classroom to maximize active learning. (p.27)

However, she further noted that only a few teachers intentionally and constantly apply any single theories as it is not necessary for teachers to be monologic in their teaching approach. In practice, all teachers join various theories and naturally apply them according to their teaching practices and situation.

### **Literature education for L2 learners**

While literary study is helpful for learning a language, its more important purpose is 'the revelation of creativity, of the knowledge of the self and of others manifested by that language used in literary context' (Balakian, 1977, p. 4). Thus, integrating literature into language instruction has been considered as bringing multiple benefits to language learners. Many researchers such as Brumfit (1985), Carter and Long (1978, 1990, 1991), Lazar (1990, 1991, 1996) and Widdowson (1975) have explored the possibilities of utilising literature in language instruction. The efforts of these researchers paved the way for literature-based language instruction comprising ideas based on principled linguistic and methodological rationales (Bassnett and Grundy, 1993) and are expected to nurture a central role for literature in second and foreign language curricula.

For L2 learners whose language skill, personal background knowledge and also literary background knowledge are limited and whose goal in studying

literature is not to become a literary scholar or critic, it is not easy for them to comprehend literary texts and literary theories in the same way as L1 learners who have studied English literature since their early educational levels and who have a stronger command over the language. According to Paran (2006), L2 learners have usually experienced a narrow view of literature in their previous schooling. They see literature as teaching fixed ways of reading or as having fixed meaning and they believe that the teachers should take responsibility in helping them to access this. The L2 learners are familiar with viewing the reading of literature as 'an efferent exercise and make no connection between what happens in the literature classroom (be it L1 or L2) and their own reading of fiction' (p.5). Paran argues for the teachers to find approaches that can help learners to leave their previous attitudes, engage them in texts, facilitate them to develop a sense of enjoyment in literature, and 'help them see the relevance of what they are reading to their own lives' (p.5).

Most research on L2 literature pedagogy suggests the benefit of studying literature from the perspective of culture and language as this offers learners access to deeper dimensions of culture and language learning and views literature as an appealing and rich resource for reading. However, according to Brumfit (2001), one of the leading scholars in L2 literature teaching, the aim of literature study in L2 learners is to enable students 'to define themselves "through contact with others' experience", and the task of the educator was fundamentally to create conditions that enabled this contact in the best possible ways.' (cited in Carter, 2007, p. 7). For Brumfit, literature should be taught for its own sake and should not be used as only for language teaching or as a window that presents the different culture or values of the target language. He argued for the appreciation and aesthetic merit of literature whether in the L1 or L2 classroom.

There are attempts from literature educators and researchers to suggest effective teaching approaches for L2 literature teaching. For example, in her study, Kaowiattakul (2008) argued for the importance of creating a balance between critical thinking and appreciation in L2 literature teaching. She

proposed that L2 students should be facilitated to engage with the literary text to stimulate their personal reflection on and appreciation of the texts from the early stages of L2 literature study. This means that literary theory should be applied to L2 literature teaching only 'when the students already possess sensitivity and confidence to respond to the texts and enjoy a genuine aesthetic experience as well as being equipped with adequate literary and language competence for the critical analysis process' (p. 27). According to Kaowiwattakul, engaging L2 students whose experience in reading English literary text and English language competence are limited to the realm of English literature can be accomplished by applying three widely accepted L2 literature teaching approaches which are reader-response theory, the stylistics approach and the language-based approach. Kaowiwattanakul claimed that reader-response theory shows the greatest potential to promote both cognitive and affective competence in the L2 students. All these literature teaching approaches will be discussed thoroughly in the following section:

*The main contemporary traditions in L2 literature teaching (see p.45)*

## **Conclusions**

Promoting criticality is challenging for both L1 and L2 education. Many attempts have been made by both L1 and L2 literature educators to integrate teaching approaches into the curriculum to facilitate the development of critical thinking in the students. This is especially challenging for L2 students whose experience in reading English literary text, English language competence and cultural background are more limited than those of L1 students. I would argue that the need for critical thinking in an L2 classroom does not mean that L2 students do not possess the ability to engage in critical thinking. In fact, they usually come to L2 classrooms with a variety of critical thinking skills developed in their first language. However, according to Jaffar (2004, p. 15), 'critical thinking does not come automatically and has to be taught and developed'. Therefore, it is necessary for literature educators and scholars to suggest effective teaching approaches that foster critical thinking in the L2 students not only in Thailand but probably in many other Asian

countries with similar teaching and learning contexts such as Malaysia, Singapore and so on.

As critical thinking does not emerge by itself, both L1 and L2 students have to achieve essential resources to accomplish their critical thinking. In order to enhance the learning of L2 students whose life experience and language competence are different from that of L1 students, it is necessary to encourage students to look beyond their academic, personal and cultural boundaries and to encourage them to be confident to ask questions not only of the teachers, but of themselves and also of the authors' point of view. This will lead them to the realisation of the significance of literary criticism and of being critical. Jaffar (2004) points out that this method of teaching will help them learn to take control of their minds and be familiar with the habit of examining and reflecting on their own ways of acting and thinking. It is clear that this teaching approach is closely related to Barnett's (1997) models of criticality. It enables the students not only to reach the domain of formal knowledge in the form of critical thinking, but also to reach the domain of the self in form of critical self-reflection. Additionally, the students can also be encouraged to develop certain intellectual resources necessary to accomplish critical thinking proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical framework: background knowledge, possession of critical concepts and also certain habits of mind that dispose them to think critically.

### **The main contemporary traditions in L2 literature teaching**

As mentioned earlier, criticality is considered one of the most essential requirements for higher education in its quest to meet the needs of the twenty-first century (Barnett, 1997). Thus, many attempts have been made by educators from various disciplines, including literature, to integrate teaching approaches which will promote criticality development in the literature classroom. Nowadays, according to Paran (2006), language and literature are no longer seen as separate entities; rather, teachers now stress the way in which understanding one is part of understanding the other.

Carter and Long (1991) presented three main models that are widely used for L2 literature teaching: *the cultural model*, *the language model* and *the personal growth model* (p. 8). This section will discuss these models as well as various teaching approaches that can be categorised into each literature teaching model. Those various teaching approaches employed in the teaching of literature are *the information-based approach*, *the paraphrastic approach*, *the language-based approach*, *the stylistics approach*, and *reader-response*.

## **1. The cultural model**

This model represents the traditional approach to teaching literature (Savvidou, 2004). It views literature as a source of facts or information so 'puts emphasis on the text as a product about which students learn[ed] to acquire knowledge' (Carter and Long, 1991, p. 8). Therefore, in this model, learners are required to explore and interpret the social, political, literary and historical context of a specific text. By using this model to teach literature, teachers not only reveal the universality thoughts and ideas presented in the literary text, but also encourage learners to understand different cultures and ideologies related to their own. According to Carter and Long (1991), teaching literature within this model 'enables students to understand and appreciate cultures and ideologies different from their own in time and space and to come to perceive traditions of thought, feeling, and from within the heritage the literature of such cultures endows' (p. 2). However, Savvidou (2004) argues that this model is basically discarded by those in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) because it tends to be teacher-centred with little opportunity to practise language ability.

The practice of this cultural model can foster the development of the intellectual resources of background knowledge as proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework. This can be seen in the way, as mentioned, that teachers encourage learners to understand different cultures and ideologies related to their own by revealing the universality of thoughts and ideas presented in the literary text. Gaining these thoughts and ideas from the literature and the

teachers' assistance will reinforce the students' background knowledge, leading to critical thinking as suggested by Bailin *et al.*: 'The depth of knowledge, understanding and experience persons have in a particular area of study or practice is a significant determinant of the degree to which they are capable of thinking critically in the area' (p. 290). After attaining the background knowledge in the literary text, the students will have a chance to practise reflection on their own understanding. This practice will thus lead to the development of the domain of the self in the form of critical self-reflection as proposed in Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality.

This cultural model in literature teaching relates to one of the literature teaching approaches proposed by Carter (1988): *the information-based approach*.

### ***Information-based approach***

This approach is considered by Carter as a way of teaching literature which offers a source of information to the students. This teaching approach tends to be teacher-centred. The students are required to focus on content and to study the characteristics and history of literature in aspects of its cultural, social, political and historical background to a text (Lazar, 1993). This teaching approach requires a large contribution from the teacher. Typical activities provided for this approach are lectures, explanations, reading of notes and criticism provided in workbooks or by the teacher (Carter and McRae, 1996). This literature teaching approach could be seen in relation to Barnett's (1997) domain of knowledge in the way it puts emphasis on the acquiring of information, categorised as knowledge in the first domain of Barnett's framework. Moreover, the information and knowledge provided by the teachers could also be seen as related to one of the intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.*'s (1999): background knowledge.

## 2. The language model

The most common approach to literature in the ESL/EFL (English as Second Language/English as a Foreign Language) classroom is what Carter and Long (1991) refer to as the '*language-based approach*' (Savvidou, 2004). This model focuses on a closer integration between language and literature with an intention to improve the language proficiency of the students by the use of literature as a resource in language learning. Compared to the cultural model, this model seems to be more student-centred since its major aim is to assist the interaction between students and the text in the reading process.

According to Carter and Long (1991, p. 9), the language model focuses on the way in which language and meaning in literature are interrelated and how language is used to create particular effects. Savvidou (2004) points out that this approach 'enables learners to access a text in a systematic and methodical way in order to illustrate specific linguistic features, that is, literal and figurative language, direct and indirect speech' (p. 3). This approach engages with a variety of strategies used in language teaching such as cloze procedure, prediction exercises, jumbled sentences, summary writing, creative writing and role play. All these strategies can be beneficial to serve specific linguistic goals. This approach also enables the students to find their own way into a text. In this language-based approach, the activities are learner-centred (Carter and Long, 1991). The focus is often on the way language is used, how linguistic forms convey literary meanings, and going beyond the literal interpretation of the lines.

Regarding its advantageous aspect to students in a literature class, Short (1983) summarises the vital advantage of this teaching approach for the students as follows:

the explicit link between linguistic structure and meaning and effect is also crucial for the teaching of literature, particularly to those students who do not already possess the sensitivity to respond in a precise enough way to literature. For it is only via such explicit linking that the understanding of how

literature works can be achieved, either for the native student of English or for the student from overseas. (p. 83)

The two literature teaching approaches which are closely related to this language model are *the stylistic approach* and *the paraphrastic approach*:

### ***Paraphrastic approach***

The paraphrastic approach deals with the surface meaning of the text (Embi and Hwang, 2007, p. 5). In this approach the literary text will be paraphrased or re-worded by the teacher to be in simpler language or even translated into their own native language. According to Rosli (1995), this approach is suitable for beginners of the target language as it acts as a method to facilitate understanding of the original idea of the author's work for the students. In the case of the Thai ESL classroom, most students are weak in English. Their understanding and comprehension of a particular literary text may be obstructed because of their limited language proficiency. Therefore, this approach can be used in supporting students to reach a better understanding of the text. According to Embi and Hwang (2007), activities suitable for this approach include 'the teacher re-telling the story or [a] poem using simpler language, the use of translation using other mother tongues and reading paraphrased versions or notes provided in the workbook or by the teacher' (p. 5). This approach is related, though not explicitly, to the background knowledge proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework of intellectual resource to accomplish critical thinking as it is the approach that helps decrease the difficulty from reading the complicated literary text and also assists the students to gain knowledge from the text more easily.

### ***Stylistic approach***

According to Widdowson (1975), the stylistic approach is 'an area of mediation between two disciplines' (p. 4): linguistics and literary criticism. This approach may provide a way of mediating between the two subjects of

English language and literature. Lazar (1993) states that by using the combination of linguistic analysis and literary criticism, stylistics approaches direct students to a closer understanding and appreciation of the literary text itself. Through this approach, students are guided to see how linguistic forms in a literary text transmit messages to the readers. According to Widdowson, the stylistic approach gives significance to literature as a text. Its priority concern is about the language. The linguistic element precedes the interpretation of the text. The value of stylistic analysis is that it can provide the means for the learners to relate a piece of literary work to their own experience of language as well as extend their personal experience. Brumfit and Carter (1986) also claimed literary stylistics as a method that fosters critical thinking development by stating that it is 'a means of formulating intuition, a means of objectifying it and rendering it susceptible to investigation and, in so doing, a means of feeling out and revising an initial interpretation' (p. 4). This is closely related to Barnett's domains of critical self-reflection and critical action in the way students can apply the knowledge they gain from the interpretation of the text to their personal experience then reflect it in the form of critical action such as problem-solving, decision making and so on.

Lazar (1993, p. 32) claims there are two objectives in this approach. Firstly, it enables students to make meaningful interpretations of the text and look beyond the surface meaning. According to Lazar, this approach uses linguistics analysis to understand how messages in the literary texts are conveyed. This idea is echoed by Holst (1989, p. 44) who asserts that the interpretation of literary texts might be assisted and enriched by the analysis of linguistics features. He stated that the stylistic approach does not mean that the elements of literary text such as plot, theme, setting or characters will be neglected. Instead, it would direct learners' attention to aspects of language which would increase the understanding of the literary text itself. Secondly, the stylistics approach helps to develop students' knowledge and awareness of the language. Typical activities that suit this approach are getting students to analyse a literary text by marking certain linguistic features, getting students to look at the language features, getting the students to compare the

description of a character in a literary text with the information about someone given in a letter of reference as the students will then be able to scrutinise the stylistic difference between the texts and the reason for the difference (Lazar, 1993).

When relating this approach to criticality development, it can be seen that the stylistic approach under the language-based model emphasises the analysis of linguistic elements and certain literary devices within a literary text as a support to interpretation and to enhance students' comprehension. Through the application of this approach and the language model in literature teaching, students' criticality is promoted at the comprehension level which is closely related to the critical thinking in the domain of formal knowledge that Barnett (1997) proposed. Apart from that, the practice of stylistic approach is also related to Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) background knowledge in the ways it stimulates the development of literary knowledge and language knowledge in the students.

### **3. The personal growth model**

The object of this model has been termed as an engagement with the reading of literary texts, or an engagement not for the sake of getting through examinations, but as a genuine liking for literature not confined solely to the classroom (Courtland *et al.*, 1998). Its aim is to motivate students to read by selecting themes, to a large extent related to their personal experiences. That is, this model encourages the students to respond and relate to the themes in the story by constructing a relationship to their personal lives. This method will, therefore, motivate the students' development of language, emotion and ideas through different themes and topics (Embi and Hwang, 2007).

According to Savvidou (2004), through this model, students are encouraged to 'express their opinions, feelings and ideas and make connections between their own personal and cultural experiences and those expressed in the text' (p. 3). This function relates to reader-response theory which emphasises the interaction of the reader with the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Cadorath and Harris

(1998, p. 188) support this idea by stating that 'text itself has no meaning, it only provides direction for the reader to construct meaning from the reader's own experience'. As a result, when readers are able to interpret text and construct meaning on the basis of their own experience learning is likely to occur.

A literature teaching approach that put an emphasis on the students' response to the text and closely relates to the personal growth model is reader-response theory.

### ***Reader-response theory***

According to Hirvela (1996), reader-response theory emphasises 'the reader's role as an active participant in the creation of meaning while reading a text, and describing the intricacies of the reader's involvement with the text' (p. 128). It is generally used in teaching as a means of getting students to interact with literature with minimum interference from the teacher. Reader-response theory has had a considerable influence on both the teaching of literature and the teaching of composition within the first language (L1) context (Hirvela, 1996, p. 129). Louise Rosenblatt (1978) who has contributed the 'transactional theory of literature' is one of the most well-known and influential figure in both disciplines. Reader-response theory is described by Rosenblatt (1978) as:

What, then, happens in the reading of a literary work? Through the medium of words, the text brings into the reader's consciousness certain concepts, certain sensuous experience, certain images of things, people, actions, scenes. The special meanings and, more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be duplicated

combination determine his response to the particular contribution of the text.  
(p. 42)

We can see that meaning and interpretation generated from a literary work is a by-product of the reader's experience of the original text together with the meaning embedded within the text. This meaning emerges through the transaction which occurs when the readers engage their life experience, personality, background with the original text which leads to interpretative authority.

Reader-response theory is based on constructivism which is a philosophy of learning founded on the basis that, by reflecting on our experiences, we construct our own understanding of the world we live in (Johnston, 2000; Amer, 2003). Individuals create their own form of learning which they use to make sense of their experiences. Reader-response approach is having a growing influence on EFL literature classes (Carlisle, 2000, p. 12). According to Ali (1994), this approach views the reading process as a transaction between readers and the text in which they interact with the text by interacting with past experience, beliefs, expectations and assumptions, and create meaning as the result of this transaction. The emergent meanings are not inherent in the text itself but are introduced by the author and generated from the text by the reader (Amer, 2003). Readers can construct their own meaning from the text according to their own preferences of interpretation and personal background. With the application of reader-response, readers are allowed to question the author's values against their own; to differentiate between fiction and reality; to discuss and evaluate forms of narration and implied cultural values of the author (Thomson, 1987).

According to Amer (2003, p. 68), the reader-response approach aims to encourage learners to respond to the text and freely express their own ideas, opinions and feeling. The main concern of the learners should be 'how they feel', rather than 'what they understand'. Therefore, from the perspective of the teachers, they should not expect just one 'correct interpretation' but also

accept 'multiple interpretations' (Rosenblatt, 1995). Amer (2003) points out that multiple interpretations 'encourage creative and critical thinking to take place in an atmosphere where there are no threats or any pressure to learn for the correct answer or to compete for the best interpretation' (p. 68).

Mora and Welch (1997) mention the influential impact of reader-response in the literature classroom on the way the students view texts and how they see their role as readers. It enables students to learn to make their own critical interpretation by relating what they read from the text to their personal background and life experience rather than relying on a teacher or critic to give them a single, standard interpretation of a text. The result will be a variety of possible responses and interpretations of students for any literary work as there is no single 'right' answer or 'correct' interpretation.

This interaction of the students' personal background and experience to create their own interpretation of the stories might be applicable to the model of criticality of Barnett (1997). In his model of criticality development, Barnett talks of the need for those seeking criticality to develop their social and personal knowledge. In other words, as society places different kinds of value on different kinds of knowledge, individuals need to be able to be aware of the wider social context and see how their own concepts of what counts as knowledge are influenced. Such self-critical awareness includes the idea of defying what is 'given' – rather than merely seeking acceptance within a given knowledge. Barnett calls this the 'transformatory' purpose of higher education – that we are not only changed as individuals through our learning, but as a result may also make change in the world (p. 3). Applying reader-response theory in reading literature will bring the same outcome. The reader's role in interpreting texts is emphasised in reader-response theory. This theory rejects the idea of a single, fixed meaning in every literary work. Instead, the theory embraces the idea that the individual *creates* his or her own meaning through a 'transaction' with the text based on personal experience. Each interpretation is personal and distinctive because each

reader brings their own emotions, concerns, life experiences, and knowledge to their reading.

This can lead to the development of three domains of criticality proposed by Barnett's: knowledge (critical reason), the self (critical self-reflection) and the world (critical action). The development of knowledge can be seen in students' process of transaction and interpretation, first they have to apply their knowledge to the story they are reading in order to reflect what they think according to their personal associations. Next, through the transaction involving their personal experiences and knowledge, students can intuitively develop the domain of self in form of critical self-reflection by critically reflecting on what they read. Finally, the students' domain of the world can be developed when they apply that knowledge and reflection to their lives outside the classroom later on in form of critical action. Meaning in literature is not to be perceived in a ready-made state, but must be actively and critically interpreted by the reader. Thus, according to Mora and Welch (1997), we can see that teaching reader-response encourages students to be aware of what they bring to texts as readers. It also helps them to be aware of the specificity of their own cultural backgrounds and to understand the cultural background of others.

The transaction involving students' personal life experience and cultural background knowledge in reading literature also relates to Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources as proposed in their framework. It is clear that this approach enables students to apply their background knowledge to text interpretation in order to create their own understanding and meaning. Through the application of this approach, students tend to be more open-minded about multiple interpretations, one of the important habits of mind that will lead to accomplished critical thinking. Moreover, reader-response also helps students to become better critical readers who know the strategies useful in thinking critically. Because their personal responses are valued, students in reader-response classrooms become *active* learners who perceive themselves as having both the authority and the responsibility to make

judgments about what they read. Through interaction with their peers, students learn about diverse ideas and interpretation which helps to broaden their perspective.

From my personal experience, Thai students have some experience in the three literature teaching models including their related teaching approaches from the Thai literature classes which they have experienced since the early school levels. Studying Thai literature in a Thai context makes a significant contribution to the resources which English education students bring to their study of L2 English literature. At school levels, all students have to study Thai literature as a compulsory course. They start studying less complicated literary texts such as the abridged literary texts in the early years of school, and move to the most complicated ones by reading the authentic great literary texts in secondary school level. In general, the teaching practice of Thai literature is conducted in the same manner as English literature teaching in Thailand. That is, the teacher takes the leading role in class by giving lectures and also group discussions and student presentations when possible.

In the early school levels, the focus of Thai literature classes is generally on the cultural model which provides understanding in content and cultural comprehension of the literary text rather than the explicit analysis of literary language or poetic devices. Then, in the higher school levels, teaching practices become more complicated by also focusing on the language-based model through the application of stylistic approaches. Emphasis is put on the analysis of literary text in term of narrative structure, grammatical structures, plot-pattern, and literary terms such as simile, metaphor, personification and so on. At this level, the students have to learn how to read and interpret literary text analytically through the application of reader-response theory which requires them to bring out their own personal experience and feeling to interact with the text.

We can see that the students arrive in English literature classes at university levels with some resources from Thai literature classes that should facilitate

their reading, comprehension and analysis of English literature. However, they do not have prior experience in reading and studying English literature at secondary school level. The English that they learn at that stage is focused primarily on vocabulary, sentence structure, and grammatical structure. Their limited language ability and background knowledge is probably the reason they still encounter problems in comprehending and analysing the meaning of the literary texts at the university level as described in the section *My beginning* in Chapter 1 (see p.1).

To sum up, from the approaches to teaching literature discussed above, it can be seen that each approach has its own distinctive way of helping students deal with literary texts. Each helps them develop criticality in a different way by focusing on a different aspect. It is clear that all literature teaching approaches have their own advantages and drawbacks. According to Savvidou (2004), the three approaches to teaching literature are different in terms of their emphasis on the text. For the cultural model, the text is seen as a cultural artefact. For the language model, the text is used as a focus for grammatical and structural analysis. For the personal growth model, the text is the motivation for personal growth activities. What Savvidou argues for is an integrated model which includes elements of all the three approaches which would make literature accessible to learners linguistically, methodologically and motivationally. Her idea of an integrated model in literature teaching is echoed by Carter (2007) who argued that,

...there is no single 'correct' way of analysis and interpreting the text, nor any single correct approach. In this sense the appropriate method is very much a hands-on approach taking each text on its own merits, using what the reader knows, what the reader is aiming for in his or her learning context, and employing all of the available tools, both in terms of language knowledge and methodological approaches. (p. 10)

In my view, what Savvidou (2004), and Carter (2007) argue for, i.e. the integrated approach to literature teaching, is practical particularly when applying it in conjunction with the two theoretical models of criticality proposed

by Barnett (1997) and Bailin *et al.* (1999). Through the integrated application of the three literature teaching models, the students will have chances to gain the necessary intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* What they will achieve is not only resources like background knowledge, but also other necessary resources such as language resources, certain habits of mind in thinking critically, and possession of critical concepts. Then, with the sufficient intellectual resources, the students are prepared to practise their criticality in different domains and levels as proposed in Barnett's framework.

## Conclusions

In this chapter I have presented a conceptualisation of criticality and also argued for the importance of criticality as one of the most crucial skills for literary studies. I have also presented two main frameworks related to critical thinking, namely Barnett's (1997) levels and domains of criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources necessary to accomplish critical thinking. The other three main models in the teaching of literature i.e. the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model are also extensively discussed here. The purpose of specifically teaching critical thinking in literary studies or any other discipline is to improve not only critical thinking but also the critical actions of students and thus better prepare them to succeed in the world. According to the research discussed in this chapter, criticality can be taught and developed through literary studies. However, criticality is a complex capacity and we should not expect that one method of instruction will prove sufficient for developing each of its component parts. We have learned that while it is possible to teach criticality and its components as separate skills, they are best developed and used when learned in connection with a specific content or domain of knowledge like literary studies. According to the literature in this chapter, it is clear that literature studies is a discipline that fits well with all three domains described by Barnett ,particularly when it is supported by the application of Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. Literature is a discipline which provides study with

critical knowledge which is in the first domain of Barnett's framework. With the achievement of critical thinking together with the application of intellectual resources such as certain habits of mind and knowledge of strategies in thinking critically, students can practise critical self-reflection from what they have learned in literary text they read. The knowledge and self-reflection they achieve from literature which is considered a 'life in miniature' will enable them to perform critical action in various forms such as problem-solving, practical decision making and so on.

In the following chapter, I will discuss how criticality is conceptualised in the Thai context by giving an overview of Thai society and its relationship to criticality.

# **Chapter 3**

## **Criticality Development in the**

## **Thai Educational Context**

### **Introduction**

Recently, the world has experienced globalisation and many global changes such as dramatic increases in the volume of information, rapid social and economic change and serious challenges such as climate change. What we need is people who can think and act critically as this enables individuals to 'deal effectively with social, scientific and practical problems' (Shakirova, 2007, p. 42) which we are encountering at present. Levin (2010) also called for 'well-educated citizens of broad perspective and dynamic entrepreneurs capable of independent and original thinking' (p. 7) who will be an essential factor for the development of a nation. We can see that the ability to think critically is indeed essential in a rapidly changing world that demands individuals who are critical in their knowledge, reflection and action (Barnett, 1997).

The significance of criticality prevails throughout human history, but particularly at present which is the era of global information as it will foster intellectual maturity on both the conceptual and the social level. Paul (1995) argues that the ability to think critically is 'the essential foundation for education because it is the essential foundation for adaptation to the everyday personal, social and professional demands of the twenty-first century and thereafter' (p. xi). Without the capacity to thinking critically, individuals will be

left behind and not be able to follow the accelerating pace of the informative, fast-changing and unstable present world. Like other nations, Thailand has ambitions to develop its full potential. It therefore needs to prepare its human resources to be equipped with the required capacity so that they will not lose the opportunities to compete in the challenges of globalisation.

I shall begin this chapter by outlining an overview of Thai society and its relation to criticality. Then there will be a discussion of the three main factors which are influential in the development of criticality in Thai students. Those three factors are *Religion*, *Thai culture* and *the Thai educational system*.

## **Thai society and criticality**

It is not only globally that critical thinking is a vital need. In Thailand today, there is a need for people who have the ability to evaluate serious economic difficulties and the current political and social upheaval in order to provide an appropriate response for the situation. Merely having knowledge is not enough. It is necessary for individuals to be effective not only in the workplace, but in their personal lives. They have to be able to solve problems to make effective decisions, that is, they have to be able to think critically (Snyder and Snyder, 2008).

At present, there are ongoing changes in Thai culture particularly due to the increasing degree of urbanisation. The traditional cultures of rural areas are breaking down as people move into cities. This cultural shift in Thailand results in instability in the characteristics of Thai culture. Clear evidence can be seen in the shift from collectivism to the greater individuality of Thai people which is due to the effect of urbanisation. This leads Thai culture to experience new characteristics such as the modernisation and urbanisation with widespread of changes in life-styles. People begin to move from rural to urban locations for work and detach themselves from being members of extended families which used to be a typical characteristic of Thai society. They begin to be more urbanised, and *individualistic*. In such a society, “the

ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after himself or herself and his or her immediate family" (Hofstede, 1991, p. 51). With the increase of the importance of individuality, Thai people are becoming more independent and thinking for themselves and an 'I' consciousness prevails rather than a 'We' consciousness. This results in the increasing practice of independence and self-confidence to a certain extent. Thai people begin to think more as individuals and this practice leads to the rising of criticality development in Thai society.

It is difficult to formulate explanations for criticality development in Thai students without considering what happens in Thai society and the need for criticality development in Thai people at large. For a person to be a better human resource for Thailand, s/he should be equipped with the ability not only to think but also act critically, innovatively, constructively, and at the same time be open to ideas from others. Instead of blindly following any leading authority's instructions, people should stop and consider whether this is right or wrong through their own critical judgment. Thus, criticality in education serves as a prerequisite for an effective strategy that would not only assist in the country's economic development but also in its path to becoming a true democracy, and perhaps a regional leader.

The need for criticality in Thailand is crucial due to the current social and political problems in Thai society. It appears that, at present, there is a discrepancy between what is taught in the classroom and the actual social practice. What the students are taught in the classroom are the values of being honest and truthful. In contrast, the mass media try to give privilege to the rich without considering that they may be corrupt. It seems that what is taught in the classroom cannot resist dominant social influences and real life experience is more persuasive than the teacher's 'preaching' (Pitiyanuwat and Sujiva, 2000). The changing of traditional Thai culture and values together with the invasion of foreign cultures leads Thailand to face the need for cultural revival and conservation of Thai identity. At present, Thailand is undergoing a social and cultural crisis as well as confusion as to its values.

Thus, it is clear that Thailand is in great need of preparing its human resource, i.e. Thai students, to have the ability to critically evaluate current global and cultural threats and opportunities to provide appropriate response and action.

Politically, Thailand is at present experiencing conflict with the decline of the administration under the patronage of the traditional-style Thai government and rising demand for self-government by the people. This is due to the growth of the new middle class and the stronger sense of democratic values among the educated younger generation. However, there are many factors such as the inefficiency of the bureaucracy, political instability and the old culture of patronage (Pitiyanuwat and Sujiva, 2000) that not only hinder Thailand's change and development, but also lead Thai society to become polarised as at present. What Thailand needs to resolve this prevailing political unrest is both reconciliation and criticality. Everyone can think differently, and reconciliation does not mean that people have to converge their thinking so that they have the same ideas. Instead, Thais have to work together on our different ideas for the benefit of Thai society. This can be accomplished by the practice of criticality which consists not only of critical thinking, but also of critical self-reflection and critical action (Barnett, 1997). In my view, in order to solve the present political crisis, Thailand is in need of 'critical beings' who are not only changed as individuals through their learning, but can also facilitate change in their society, country and the world as a result.

The concern for critical thinking development in Thai context has been presented in some empirical studies. For example, Jantrasakul (2004) disclosed that conceptualisations about critical thinking were rarely identified in practice in the Thai EFL high school classes. She argued that the Thai educational system does not emphasise training and motivating students to practise their criticality. Kaoriwattanakul (2008) also echoed this problem in her study of conceptions and pedagogical practices of critical thinking skills in the L2 literature classroom in the Thai university.

Universities, government and organisations in Thailand regard critical thinking as one of the key outcomes of Thai education. The educational reform of 1999 aimed to facilitate students becoming critical thinkers, problem-solvers and life-long learners as the government realised that the most important aspect enabling Thailand to successfully compete in the global marketplace is human resources that is Thai people themselves (Ministry of Education, 2004). The government argued that it is necessary to prepare Thai individuals to be ready to compete in the rapidly challenging world outside by training them to possess critical thinking and criticality from an early age. This practice is the responsibility of schools and universities. They probably should provide students with resources that enable them to think critically, act critically, be rational and full of self-confidence. The students are expected to become more selective and aware of problems and thus become citizens who are critical and knowledgeable enough to practise rational and practical judgments in their lives. However, accomplishing those aims is not straight forward as there are always tensions between encouraging criticality and maintaining Thai culture. What the government proposed for its people seemed not to be aligned with what was going on in practice. Despite all tensions and difficulties, there are many factors affecting criticality practice and development in Thailand such as religion, culture, values and the educational system which will be discussed in the following section.

## **The three main factors which affect the development of criticality in Thai students**

In this section, I will discuss three main contextual factors which influence the development of criticality in Thai students i.e. *religion*, *Thai culture and values*, and *the Thai educational system*.

## Religion

The official religion in Thailand is Theravada Buddhism and more than 95% of Thais are Theravada Buddhists (Ingle, 1983; National Identity Board, 2000; O'Sullivan and Tjajaroensuk, 1997). Theravada Buddhism has directly or indirectly exerted a strong influence on the people's everyday life. According to Komin (1991), the value of religious and spiritual life has a very important place in the minds of Thai people in general. Theravada promotes the concept of *Vibhajjavada* (Pali), literally 'the Teaching of Analysis.' This doctrine says that insight must come from the one's experience, critical investigation, and reasoning instead of by blind faith. According to Buddhism, learning has three purposes: learn to know oneself, learn to know the surrounding world, and learn to know the relation between oneself and the surrounding world.

Venerable Phra Depvedi Prayut Payutto, (Payutto, 2002) one of Thailand's most well-known Buddhist scholars, explains that there are two factors in learning: hearing or learning from others, and analytical reflection. In order to develop, one must develop one's behaviour, mind and wisdom. He states that the Buddha's Dhamma is a human development so that a person can lead life mindfully, with knowledge and wisdom. Searching and evaluation of oneself is the culmination of the training with wisdom coupled with practice.

Professor Sumon Amornvivat (1999, cited in Kaewdang, no date), Thailand's leading scholar, mentions some learning principles according to Buddhism that is:

- (1) Buddhism perceives a human being both as an individual and as a member of society living with others; (2) Human beings can be trained and can be developed; (3) Human beings are different but each one is born with intellect or wisdom to be further developed; and (4) The learning principle occurs through the whole life process in a holistic manner. (p. 5).

The significance of wise teachings in Buddhism which relate to the practice of criticality development in every aspect of life is also presented by Komin (1990):

... Thai Buddhism primarily serves as a psychological function for the people, whether in its function of explaining the 'how and why' things happened like in the 'actual' usage of *karma* often as an after-event justification of negative experiences, or in its function of providing a 'road map' to cope with one's social environment for one's social and psychological survival, or in its function of providing salvation by entering monkhood as a 'way out' of trouble (in times of crisis)—be it in the notion of heavenly reward (*nirvana*) or a means to escape an unpleasant or dangerous situation. (p. 693)

It can be said that Buddhism is a religion of human development which emphasises the thinking process, the learning of each individual and the relation of an individual to the development of their society. We can see that this idea is closely related to the Barnett's (1997) three domains of criticality: the formal knowledge, the self and the world.

The concept of rationality and criticality prevails in Buddhism, particularly in the doctrine *Kalama Sutta*, the concept of *Yonisomanasikara*, and consequently *Ariyasacca* or *the Four Noble Truths*.

### **Kalama Sutta**

One of the directly relevant messages about critical thinking is found in the Lord Buddha's teaching, *Kalama Sutta*. In *Kalama Sutta*, the Buddha taught people not to accept or believe anything immediately. He gave ten basic conditions to beware of in order to avoid becoming the intellectual slave of anyone, even of the Buddha himself. This principle enables us to know how to choose the teachings which are truly capable of reducing suffering in life. The teachings which the Buddha gave in the *Kalama Sutta* are as follows:

Do not believe something just because it has been passed along and retold for many generations.

Do not believe something merely because it has become a traditional practice.

Do not believe something simply because it is well-known everywhere.

Do not believe something just because it is cited in a text.

Do not believe something solely on the grounds of logical reasoning.

Do not believe something merely because it accords with your philosophy.

Do not believe something because it appeals to 'common sense.'

Do not believe something just because you like the idea.

Do not believe something because the speaker seems trustworthy.

Do not believe something thinking, 'This is what our teacher says.'

When you yourselves know, 'This is unwholesome, this is blameworthy, this is censured by the wise, these things when accepted and practised lead to harm and suffering', then you should give them up.

(Anguttara Nikaya, Vol. 1, pp. 188-93)

The ten examples of the *Kalama Sutta* are a reliable defence against intellectual dependence or neglecting one's own intelligence and wisdom in dealing with what one hears and listens to. When listening to anything, one should give it careful attention and full scrutiny. If there is reason to believe what has been heard, then one may eventually believe it. The *Kalama Sutta* never forbids Buddhists to listen to or believe in anything. Instead, it simply begs them to listen and believe with independent intelligence and wisdom i.e.

with critical thinking. What it intends is to help everyone to be able to think, believe, reflect, and decide with great subtlety and precision of criticality.

The same concept of *Kalama Sutta* is further interpreted by Kinnes (2002) when he says that:

Buddha says that it is not wise and good enough merely to hold fast to one's own opinions without evidence while failing to investigate things further. What he is into is that it is wise to make a proper examination before accepting teachings as true and good. Hence, it should pay to examine things rationally and carefully. In conclusion, the Sutta says that the one with this kind of rational and sympathetic equanimity may enjoy the bliss and the favoured self-assurance. (p. 13)

According to Kinnes (2002), the term 'self-assurance' echoes to the characteristic of 'self-reliance' which is one of Theravada Buddhist aspects. Thus, we can see that Buddhism has a doctrine that is directly relevant to critical thinking and criticality. The principle of *Kalama Sutta* is very practical and useful not only for everyday life, but also in educational aspects as it promotes an open, questioning approach in education. It encourages students to think reasonably and critically by using their own judgement and intelligence before believing or accepting anything they hear. Teaching the students to think before accepting anything as truth will enable them to use their intellect to examine and analyse the teaching or data they receive for the first time. When they grow up, students will be able to understand the principle of the *Kalama Sutta* more and more. They will practice all ten teachings themselves as they become fully mature adults due to their training by this standard.

The principal concept of *Kalama Sutta* is directly related to Barnett's (1997) first domain (i.e. the critical knowledge) and also leads to the second and third domain (i.e. the critical self and the critical action respectively) in the framework of criticality in the way it enables us to reflect, believe, examine, and agree on with precision of understanding and knowledge before making

any decisions, or any critical actions in life according to their critical judgements. In other words, this teaching guides us to explore and investigate the knowledge or information with critically or wittingly judgment.

### **Yonisomanasikara**

Yonisomanasikara is one of the most distinguished teachings in Buddhism that directly emphasises the inner element of critical and systematic thinking. Literally, this concept means a critical reflection or thinking in terms of specific conditions such as causal relations or problem solving, reasoned attention, systematic attention or analytical thinking. It is an internal factor which belongs to the category of insight or wisdom that helps get rid of ignorance and desire (Payutto, 2002, p. 41).

According to the Buddha, a right view occurs when ones uses systematic attention or reflective thought to see things and this will lead to the extinction of suffering. The wrong view and then suffering arises with viewing without reflective attention. *Yonisomanaskisara* is the way of thinking that enables people to attain knowledge with correct thinking which is 'structured, reasoned and in harmony with causes and conditions' (Payutto, 2005, p. 16). According to Phra Depvedi Prayut Payutto, an important factor in the development of the right view is intelligent or critical reflection, involving understanding in accordance with reality. It is to perceive or understand things according to their causes and conditions. Yonisomanasikara is divided into ten ways of thinking (Payutto, 2002, pp. 41-140):

1. Thinking to find out the cause
2. Analysed thinking
3. Normative thinking
4. Thinking by Ariyasacca or the Four Noble Truths
5. Thinking relating to aim
6. Thinking in relation to advantage/disadvantage and the solution
7. Thinking about true/untrue value
8. Thinking to create ethics

9. Thinking about current situation, and
10. Thinking in the frame of Vipachvas.

All ten ways of thinking in *Yonisomanasikara* are the kinds of thought that bring wisdom to solve problems. It is a very important aspect of the Buddhist way to attain truth and wisdom. In my view, *Yonisomanasikara* is clearly related to the critical reason and critical self-reflection, the first and second domain in Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality, in the way it emphasises the practice of critical reasoning and critical reflection of one's knowledge and understanding. Moreover, this teaching is also a successive step from the aforementioned Buddhist doctrine, *Kalama Sutta*. In this, Buddha advises people of ways to apply critical reasons or critical thinking in order to attain knowledge by not simply believing in things unless they have seen from themselves and used their intelligence to examine and to analyse the data they received. Then, by the practice of the ten ways of thinking in *Yonisomanasikara*, people are able to attain critical reason and knowledge by using their logical, systematic and critical thought for self-reflection, one form of criticality in the domain of self in Barnett's framework. Moreover, the practice of critical reflection in *Yonisomanasikara*, particularly in the fourth kind of thinking i.e. thinking by Ariyasacca or the Four Noble Truths, as I will discuss in the following paragraphs, also directs people to their critical action, a form of criticality in the third domain in Barnett's framework.

### **Ariyasacca**

*Ariyasacca*, or the Four Noble Truths, is the core of the Buddhist teaching that emphasises ways to know and understand the problem clearly to seek its cause, and so solve the problem in relation to that cause. According to the Buddha, the Four Noble Truths are as follows:

**Dukkha:** Suffering or dissatisfaction. However, in term of the Noble Truths suffering has a deeper and wider meaning. Dukkha encompasses the whole

physical and mental suffering of all existence. It is the truth that people have to encounter all along their lives.

**Samudaya:** The cause of suffering. Craving or desire is the cause of all suffering. Thus, in order to diminish the suffering in life; we have to know its origin.

**Nirodha:** The cessation of suffering or the unmaking of sensual desire and affection. After understanding the cause of suffering, it is necessary to free ourselves by extinguishing all forms of attachment. This means that by removing the cause of suffering, all sufferings can simply be overcome.

**Magga:** The path leading to ending of suffering. There is a path to the end of suffering which is through the gradual path of self-improvement. Lord Buddha suggests an eightfold path as the way to free ourselves from all suffering.

It is clear that the concept of *Ariyasacca* can be applied to Barnett's third domain of criticality, critical action. In my view, *Dukkha* or suffering may be applied to all kinds of suffering or problems in life which everyone has to encounter. When a person has any problems, the ultimate aim is to take action by finding the *Magga*, or way to end that problem. Thus, this will lead to the practice of critical action in order to achieve the problem-solving. However, a person cannot practise an effective critical action at all unless they know its nature and cause (*Samudaya*) of that problem or suffering. Apart from that they should have strong intention, or *Nirodha*, before *Magga*, or a way to take action in ending that problem, may be undertaken.

## Conclusions

Teachings of Buddhism (*Kalama Sutta*, *Yonisomanasikara* and *Ariyasacca*) occupy the complete concept of criticality calling for critical reasoning, critical self-reflection and critical action as proposed by Barnett (1997). Moreover, all these three Buddhist's teachings are also related to Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical framework of resource necessary to accomplish critical thinking.

This can be seen in the way they encourage people to use the resource of the 'habit of mind' and 'critical spirit' which refer to attitudes and values to which the critical thinker is committed. These are respect for truth, open-mindedness and so on (Bailin *et al.*, 1999, p. 290). With the most supportive and valuable religious teachings like these, it is clear that Thai people are equipped for their development of criticality. So, encouraging Thai people to realise and appreciate the benevolence of these doctrines will be a useful way to foster the emergence of 'critical beings' in Thai society.

Apart from the three main doctrines which encourage criticality, other aspects of Buddhism that affect the development of criticality in Thai people are its concept of seniority and *karma*. These are in potential conflict with the three main doctrines. Theravada Buddhism is known as 'the teaching of elders' or 'the ways of elders' (Browell, 2000, p. 9) and this is apparent in the practice of paying respect to the elderly within families and society in general. Like most religions, Theravada Buddhism is complex, but one aspect of it is simple and straightforward: it places very high value on harmony among people. Buddhism focuses on the individual's life with the cycle of birth, living, death and rebirth until the truth, or *nirvana*, is obtained. According to Fieg (1998), for Buddhists what happens in the people's lives is a result of their '*karma*', the process of cause and effect: do well and prosper; do ill and suffer (p. 75). People earn merit for good deeds and tribulations for bad deeds. This *karma* is influenced by present as well as future deeds. In the pursuit of these merits and avoidance of tribulations, the individual is expected to promote peace and harmony and to avoid extreme mental states.

Buddhism also encourages individuals to forgive and apologise to others so as to express tolerance and compassion for them (Wells, 1960). It is felt that opposing, pressing, and overcoming another person today will simply come back to haunt one in another life thus it is better to forgive and apologise. As it is encouraging Thais to seek harmony, to forgive and to apologise, Buddhism also advises obedience to those above them in the social hierarchy (those in official positions or with better economic status, older individuals such as

parents, or teachers, and persons of higher social ranks), because obedience contributes to the collective harmony. This is also a result of the belief in 'karma' which stresses lack of involvement and the acceptance of the status quo in order to avoid extremes of emotion or confrontation (Adamson 2003; Foley 2005; Fieg 1998). This leads to the practice of Thais in avoiding confrontation in any conflicts, especially with seniors and elders such as parents or teachers.

The basis for Thai ideals about the good Thai person and teacher are provided by Thai Buddhist beliefs. In a family, children are taught early about what is right or wrong in both their behaviour and thoughts. There is a strong trust in experts and specialisation. Teachers and elders are perceived to have the right answers and explanation for every aspect of life. Wallace (2003) asserted that in the Buddhist view, 'the teacher is a role model for students by being a 'moral parent' who is patient, cares for and protects students from the unknown, wants students to be in norm, knows and recommends the right way of living' (p. 20). This leads to the belief that teachers and elders are superior and always right, that knowledge will be passed by teachers and that consensus in society is to be preferred to questioning. This social belief is illustrated clearly in a Thai proverb, '*dern tarm phu-yai mha mai khud*', meaning 'follow the elders and you will be successful.'

There are conflicts between the Buddhist religion and Thai society in that Buddhism focuses on the teaching of thinking process and analysis whilst Thai society teaches expectations of harmony by adherence to the social norm. In my view, this conflict is a key issue when related to criticality development in students. There is a need to explore whether the conflicting principles work together or not and what exactly should be emphasised in actual social practice. However, as discussed earlier, Buddhism is the religion of human development which underlines the learning of each individual. Thus, although promoting criticality in Thai students cannot be accomplished in a straightforward manner, it is likely to be successful when it goes hand in hand with the Buddhist concept of learning. In addition, with the support of other

factors such as Thai culture and values and the practice of learning reform in Thailand, which will be mentioned in the following section, it is possible to develop an adapted conception of criticality in Thai students.

### **Thai culture and values**

Thailand is often referred to as 'the land of smiles', reflecting the disposition and culture of its people who are generally easy-going, hospitable and friendly (Browell, 2000). The national religion is Buddhism and is followed by the majority of Thais. Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and other faiths are also openly practiced and protected under the Thai Constitution. In general, Thai people are concerned about harmony, respect and dignity. Displays of anger, bad temper, rude behaviour and impatience are considered inappropriate. At present, due to the current economic situation as well as the political crisis taking place in Thailand causing severe conflict among groups of Thai people, it seems that these typical characteristics are not altogether stable. Thai society is currently undergoing change in various aspects particularly a cultural shift which leads to the change of some cultural characteristics, so it is necessary to prepare our citizens to think critically, be rational and confident in expressing their individual voice and performing critical actions, for the sake of the development of Thailand.

Geert Hofstede (1997), the Dutch management researcher, defines culture as 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another' (p. 5). He has had a profound influence on the analysis of cultural difference and his work on culture is one of the most widely used pieces of research among scholars and practitioners (Jones, 2007; Furrer, 2000; Ross, 1999; Sondergaard, 1994). His initial factor analysis proposed four dimensions on which culture varies: power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity and uncertainty avoidance. In my view and according to my personal experience as a Thai, it seems that Hofstede's study views the domestic population as a homogeneous whole and thus it is restricted by the character of the individual cultures being

assessed. Thus, the outcome of his analysis is possibly uncertain as there are always variations in the community influences within the cultures. Hofstede's study is still useful, but its use and application must be conducted with some caution. Within Hofstede's (1997) terms, Thailand demonstrates a *high power distance, collectivist approach, strong uncertainty avoidance and high femininity* in its culture.

### **Power distance**

The first important characteristic of Thais is 'power distance'. According to Hofstede (1997), power distance refers to 'the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organisations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally' (p. 5). In Thai society the practice of 'high power distance' is perceived in its emphasis on the gap between junior and superior or teachers and students. According to Dr. Suthree Komin (1991), a well-known Thai educator and a Fulbright scholar, Thai culture is characterised by 'a tight hierarchical social system, accepted existential inequality, and a strong value of relationships' (p. 47). In Thai society, there is a hierarchy in relationships that centres on relative seniority. Superior-inferior relationships are clearly defined by its various respects such as age, birth, title, status, or position. This aspect of power distance is portrayed clearly in the respect for seniority. The young are supposed to pay respect to elders, that is, parents, and teachers in particular, as it is a norm that the young should be grateful to those who nurture and educate them. In my view, this cultural practice is probably due to the typical characteristics of an extended family in Thailand with many generations living in one house. Traditionally, the elder family members hold positions of honour and respect within the family unit, therefore, respect for seniority is learned at a young age by all Thai citizens.

Despite the fact that the senior is superior in their social relationships, it does not mean that they are not equal to others. Superiors in any organisation still have authority, but it does not mean that inferiors have to be frightened of

them. In fact, the superior's role is more like of that of a parent, who is required to make decisions and take care of their family and, in return, the family or the inferior people are grateful and respectful to them. As a result, according to Wallace (2003), in traditional Thai culture, children or young people have to behave well and be quiet when they are with elders. They seldom disagree with older people whom they regard as superior in power. Thus, what they do is to be quiet without expressing any opinions or asking any questions, as quietness is considered a virtue. With my own personal experience as a Thai who has been brought up in a traditional Thai family, I agree with what Wallace noted about this power distance aspect of Thai culture. However, these values and practices are changing because of the current economic and political changes which lead people to become more individualistic and expressive in their ideas and opinion as clearly could be seen in the civil unrest which took place in Thailand in 2009.

## **Collectivism**

Collectivism is another important characteristic of Thai culture. Hofstede (1997) defines collectivism as a cultural dimension that is characterised by a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are in a part to look after them and protect them when they are in trouble. In exchange, they feel they owe absolute loyalty to the group. Thais are collectivist (Hofstede, 1997; Schwartz, 1994) and therefore they wish to save face; seek to avoid conflict, and are hesitant to engage in direct confrontation when facing misunderstanding, disagreements or having conflicting goals. This leads to the most important Thai personal characteristics which are a low tolerance for conflict (Roongrengsuke and Chansuthus, 1998) and a general acceptance of the obligation to have smooth relationships and personally resolve conflicts (Komin 1990; Phillips, 1996). Thais do not view conflict as having a 'Janus nature' (Callister and Wall, 2004), having both negative and positive sides. Rather, they see it as more or less destructive. The reason is that, for Thais, conflict is the opposite to the social harmony that they hold as

a central belief. They also feel that maintaining good relationships is more important than task accomplishment (Roongrengsuke and Chansuthus, 1998). They believe that conflict risks and usually results in loss of face for one or both parties.

*Face or saving face* which is another dominant characteristic in Thai people means that the avoidance of criticism is particularly important in a collectivist society like Thailand (Komin, 1990). Thais believe that presenting a good image in public is important and that one should behave in a manner that allows others to have a good image (Roongrengsuke and Chansuthus, 1998). According to Prpic and Kanjanapanyakom (2004), placing someone in an embarrassing or shameful situation should be particularly avoided in Thai interpersonal relationships. Thus, everyone tries to avoid another person losing face; encouraging loss of face would be perceived as an act of aggression in Thai society. Mulder (1978) notes that, for Thais, critique is often experienced as criticism, social disrespect or personal insult, and thus is an improper manner in which to challenge seniors. This may be seen in the typical classroom and also my case study classrooms when students try not to raise questions in class. This is probably because, firstly, the students do not want to bother the teachers as they are of a higher status, and secondly, they want to avoid making the teachers lose 'face' in case they may not know the answer.

I truly understand the practice of *saving face* by the students as I used to be like them when I was a student at the early levels of school. When I was grown up this kind of feeling lessened due to my personal and educational experience. When I become a teacher myself, however, the practice of *saving face* by the students was clearly seen. There were some times that the students came to ask me after classes about the answers that their friends gave in classes. I asked them why they did not raise these questions in class so that their friends could share the answers or ideas. Those students told me that they were not quite sure about their questions and they did not want their friends to feel embarrassed and lose face among friends.

The practice of *saving face* by Thai students in classroom situations also refers to the concept of *kreng jai*, which literally mean ‘constricted heart’ and is one of the key characteristics of the Thai. *Kreng jai* is perhaps one of the most difficult Thai cultural concepts for Westerners to understand (Knutson *et al.*, 2003). There is no equivalent meaning of *kreng jai* in English; however, Komin (1990) explains that it means:

... to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feelings (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person. (p. 164)

A feeling of *kreng jai* often seems to restrain Thai students when asking their teacher to repeat and explain something in class. Foley (2005) comments on the possible negative aspects of a high degree of *kreng jai* in the students that it can result in a ‘lack of intuition, weakness, and subservience’ (p. 229). Thus, by *saving face* and *kreng jai* together with the value of ‘respect for seniority’ mentioned earlier, Thai students are unwilling to express straight feedback or ask direct question of their teachers for fear of causing offence and challenging ‘face’ (Adamson, 2005). The description of Thai students with their feeling of *kreng jai* and *saving face* are true to my personal experience as a Thai student when I was young. Until now, these feelings still somehow remain; however, according to my academic and working experience, I have learned to manage and practise them appropriately in certain situations.

### **Uncertainty avoidance**

This characteristic refers to ‘the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situations and try to avoid such situations’ (Hofstede, 1997). According to Hofstede’s scheme, Thailand is considered a country with ‘high uncertainty avoidance’. Knutson (1998) echoes this by commenting that, for Thais, life itself consists of much uncertainty so their attitude toward the unexpected is one of passive acceptance: what will be, will be. This indicates Thai society’s low level of

tolerance for uncertainty, and as a result, it does not readily accept change and risk is undesirable. When confronting any uncertainty in life, Thais prefer to avoid it as they consider ‘what is different is dangerous’. This cultural dimension of Thais will affect their criticality development. As they tend to avoid anything different or uncertain, it means that they choose not to question, confront or be critical in any challenging situations or ideas in life. According to Hall and Hall (1987), for Thais, ‘order depends on people’s knowing and accepting their proper place or rank and on not disturbing ‘the proper order’ of things (p. 45). In my own personal teaching experience, the practice of Thai students in their uncertainty avoidance may be evident in the way they prefer structured assignments rather than taking chances on more open-ended assignments. Instead of general guidelines which provide them opportunities to present their personal ideas in assignments, the students often prefer detailed and explicit instructions in order to make sure that they will meet the teacher’s expectations.

## **Femininity**

The last dimension of Thai national culture is ‘femininity’ as opposed to ‘masculinity’. According to Hofstede (1997), the masculinity – femininity dimension describes the degree to which a culture values achievement or social support. Hofstede defines masculinity as a cultural characteristic that:

pertains to societies in which social gender roles are clearly distinct i.e. men are supposed to be assertive, tough and focused on material success whereas women are supposed to be more modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. Femininity pertains to societies in which social gender roles overlap i.e. both men and women are supposed to be modest, tender and concerned with the quality of life. (p. 5)

Thai people show evidence of many feminine qualities such as reciprocity, politeness, quietness, caring for others, and so on. ‘Reciprocity of kindness’, or the concept of *Bunkhun*, is a highly respected characteristic in Thai society

and may also be categorised in Hofstede's cultural dimension of femininity. *Bunkhun* engages a prominent place in Thai interpersonal relationships (Komin, 1990). In my view, the concept of *Bunkhun* in Thai society and education is wider than gratitude, the English term. It is a psychological bond between someone who sincerely provides another person with the help and favours they need without expecting anything in return. To provide an example, in Thais' view we all have to be more than grateful to a parent because of their *Bunkhun* in giving us not only life, but nurture. Thus, it is necessary for us to express our gratitude for their *Bunkhun* by showing respect, being obedient, and taking care of them as best as we can. According to Komin (1990), in Thailand, the teacher is respected as the second parent and role model for students by 'being a moral parent who is patient, cares for and protects students from the unknown, wants students to be happy and grow, dresses and speak politely, knows and recommends the right way of living' (p. 19). Teachers' self-sacrifice for the sake of their students creates a moral debt of *Bunkhun* on the students' part (Foley, 2005).

Due to *Bunkhun*, teachers are highly respected in the Thai social hierarchy and this links to the concept of *kreng jai*, which is also related to the practice of criticality development as previously mentioned. According to my teaching experience and personal talks with some students, there were times that the students disagreed with the teacher's lectures. However, what they chose was quietness instead of expressing their opinions directly to the teacher either in class or in person. The reason is their feeling of *kreng jai* towards the teacher whom they regard as in higher status and has *Bunkhun* for them. Expressing disagreement with a teacher who is older and has *Buhkhun* for them is considered an ungrateful practice in Thai social context.

### **Implications**

It is clear that Thai cultural norms and values are powerful factors that affect the development of criticality in Thai students. Although Hofstede's (1997) categorisation of Thai cultural dimensions as collectivist, high power distance,

strong uncertainty avoidance and high femininity in its culture are perceived as factors that affect criticality development in Thai students, it does not mean that the development of criticality is impossible and incompatible with Thai culture. Although Thai people are becoming more individualistic and less collectivistic due to the effect of urbanisation in Thailand, their cultural characteristics such as being supportive and cooperative remain strongly in their nature. These characteristics encourage students to think together and exchange their ideas, in fact facilitating the incidence of criticality, as it is hard for someone who is alone to be critical in things around them. Therefore Hofstede's generalisation has to be treated with some caution as changes are currently taking place in Thailand. However, his study still provides useful insight to Thai cultural dimensions in general.

### **The Thai educational system**

Historically, Thai education evolved around temples and royal courts. Buddhist monks provided basic education to boys in classes set within temple compounds, whereas children of the royal household and of noble families were educated at royal courts. Education provided by monks emphasised morality and Buddhist teachings. Education at royal courts emphasised necessary knowledge for daily life, and also agricultural and vocational techniques (Ministry of Education, 2006). This system continued without direct intervention from the state for centuries until the nineteenth century when the external pressure finally forced changes in the Thai educational system. The Thai educational system has been modernised and made accessible to the public with the issue in 1871 of the Education Proclamation during the reign of King Rama V (1863-1919 AD) when there was a need for educated people in part due to the expansion of the country's system of government. At that time, Thailand was endangered by the increasing power of European colonial powers, and in order to resist colonisation it was necessary to stimulate massive and rapid modernisation through education. The kings established a number of schools both in Bangkok and other provinces with a curriculum of

four years of compulsory study. Higher education was also put into action and Chulalongkorn University was established as the first university in the Kingdom on 26 March 1917 (Ministry of Education, 2006)

Under the present education system various types and methods of learning are offered to learners regardless of their economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Educational approaches are classified as formal, non-formal and informal (Ministry of Education, 2006). In this study, I will discuss only the formal education provided in Thailand. The formal educational system in Thailand is made up of basic education and higher education (Ministry of Education, 2006). *Basic education* comprises the first 12 years of education. Its three levels include elementary, Grades 1 to 6; lower secondary, Grades 7 to 9; and upper secondary, Grades 9 to 12. Specialisation starts in upper secondary school when students choose to study in the academic stream or the vocational stream. The former prepares students for further studies at academic institutions, while the latter provides training for the labour market, or for continued education in vocational and technical colleges.

*Higher education* comprises two levels: the diploma level and the degree level. Studies at the diploma level are undertaken from one to four years and certificates or diplomas are awarded to successful graduates. The degree level comprises undergraduate and graduate degrees. Undergraduate programmes are four years in length, with the exception of subjects such as architecture and medicine, which require five to six years of study. Graduate programmes include a one-year Graduate Diploma, a two-year Masters Degree and a three-year Doctoral Degree.

### **Thai educational concepts and practice**

According to several educators (Pitiyanuwat and Sujiva , 2000; Wiriyachitra, 2001; Punthumasen, 2007), Thai education in general still focuses on transferring academic knowledge, and on rote learning, rather than trying to enhance learners' abilities in acquiring knowledge, creativity and problem

solving skills. Although rote learning has beneficial aspects of its own as memorisation of basic units of information is a function of the intellect, this teaching practice does not encourage creativity and critical thinking. In a rote learning class there is little participation or interaction and the teacher's role is as a knowledge provider who knows everything and is not to be questioned. Even within higher education there is a lack of participation. The evidence can be seen in the way students often look for the 'right' answer and expect that the teachers will provide them with that 'one correct answer' (Browell, 2000, p. 113). These expectations and also the cultural values such as uncertainty avoidance, power distance and femininity as mentioned earlier, result in the high respect and expectations for teachers to have a high level of proficiency and knowledge. This practice was echoed in Kaowiwattanakul (2008)'s study which investigates conceptions and pedagogical practices of critical thinking skill in the L2 literature classroom in Thai university. Her findings revealed that the participant teachers also played a dominant role in leading the direction of the class and there was a greater amount of teacher talk than student talk. However, the lectures she observed contained elements of interactivity, seen in the teacher's use of close-ended and open-ended questions in class which helped stimulate the students to participate mentally despite their quietness and lack of participation in class.

In her study of Thai teachers and the practice of critical thinking, Dr. Mere Wallace, Professor of Anthropology and Director of Teacher Education at the University of the South, provides an overview concept of 'a good Thai person'. In traditional Thai society, a good person should always be 'a follower, and be conservative, patriotic, friendly, hospitable and yielding in order to maintain the social harmony as the ideal' (Wallace, 2003, p. 12). Typically, Thais are expected to practise this concept of a good Thai person by being obedient, giving respect and caring for elderly people including their teachers. This norm directs Thai people to respect their teachers and always regard them as in a higher position, not in an equal social class. The concept of a good Thai person also relates to the Buddhist notion of good teaching which focuses on 'supporting students to become self confident and brave to think, speak, and

act' (Wallace, 2003, p. 20). According to Wallace (2003), the teacher is perceived as a role model for students by being not only an academic provider but also a 'moral parent' (p. 19) who protects and nurtures students in all aspects of their lives by instructing them on what is right or wrong and what to do or not do. From my own personal experience both as a Thai student and also a Thai teacher for several years, what Wallace claimed about the high expectations that people hold about the characteristics and teaching of Thai teachers is undeniable. The teacher is expected to be polite and treat students with good manners and, as a result, students are supposed to treat teachers with respect. In a Thai classroom this generally means being quiet and avoiding speaking unless asked to by teachers. Wallace (2003) claims that this is the reason for difficulty in promoting critical thinking in Thai students because without access to what the teacher considers to be bad and wrong, students cannot learn to think critically.

This traditional practice leads to another aspect concerning Thai higher education which is its teacher-centred nature. This contributes enormously to most Thai students being used to performing as they are directed by teachers. Students learn to behave passively in this teaching culture, referred to as 'spoon-feeding'. As a Thai teacher with several years of teaching experience, I agree with Wallace (2003) in her description of a typical Thai classroom in which students sit silently at their desk and repeat what teacher has told them, together with their fifty classmates. What they expect is to stay with their classmates. What the teacher expects is that students stay together and repeat. It is almost difficult to imagine that such a student will halt the classroom flow and ask a question. The relationship between teacher and student is a strong manifestation of a senior/junior relationship. Further, both teachers and students are described in terms of good and bad as follows:

A 'good' teacher is an expert and has all the answer (or they lose face), organise the content into appropriate learnable units, presents the content clearly via lectures, ensure that the students acquire and retain the knowledge, and is kind and nice to their students.

A 'good' student acknowledge that the teacher is senior and has greater knowledge, pays close attention and carries out all instructions given by the teacher, is quiet in class, retains all the knowledge given by the teacher, and is respectful and loyal to the teacher

(Prpic and Kanjanapanyakom, 2004, p. 7)

According to traditional Thai culture and values, Thais will not openly criticise or question (Browell, 2000; Wallace 2003; Prpic and Kanjanapanyakom 2004). It seems that some elements in Thai culture may be in conflict with criticality development in Thai students. Encouraging criticality becomes a challenging task for teachers throughout the country. From the Thai cultural perspective, there are the traditional beliefs that teachers are superior and always right, that knowledge will always be handed down by teachers that social harmony is to be preferred rather than asking questions. These cultural values are influential factors that affect the development of criticality in Thai students. Moreover, the current teaching approach in Thai education is based on the premise that the teacher is always right. Accordingly students do not take the initiative, and wait to be told. The students do not feel it is appropriate to question the teacher. Teachers are viewed as the givers of knowledge. Students see themselves as inexperienced and thus not in a position to share or express ideas. This leads to an uncritical and unquestioning acceptance of what is written in textbooks or what is delivered in lectures. Given this context, the encouragement of criticality is not easy.

However, nowadays, despite all difficulties in teaching and learning practice resulted from traditional Thai culture and educational system, there is an ongoing change in teaching practice in the Thai educational system. This change in some way challenges the traditional teaching and learning practice in Thailand as presented by many scholars and helps foster critical thinking in the students. Clear evidence can be seen in the study of Kaowiwattanakul (2008) which revealed that the despite many factors constraining the development of critical thinking in Thai students (that is the Thai educational system, social expectation and cultural values, modern technology and

influence of media, students' personal and academic factors, classroom factors, reading problems and others), it is possible for critical thinking to be developed in Thailand particularly through the teachers' pedagogical practice. In her classroom observations, Kaoriwattanakul stated that there were three activities employed by the teachers that encouraged the development of critical thinking in the students. Those teaching activities were lecturing, group discussion, and student presentations. For lecturing, there are teachers' six areas of classroom practice that helps promote students' critical thinking: enhancing language skills, building up disciplinary concepts, engaging with text, creating personal response, application, and evaluation. Despite the limited opportunities for students to participate in whole class discussion, group discussion is another practice that offers a place where the students can express their critical ideas among friend with more confidence than in the whole class. Student presentation is another activity that can requires students to present several levels of critical thinking although with the need of more focused support from the teachers.

Apart from the empirical studies on critical thinking development in Thai students by researchers, the concern for criticality development can be witnessed in the current educational reform in Thailand which focuses on the attempt to prepare students to become life-long learners and good thinkers (Ministry of Education, 2004). Thailand's Office of National Education Commission (ONEC) started a major reform programme in 1999 which set as its goal enabling students to become critical thinkers, problem solvers and lifelong learners following the realisation that that human resource is the most important factor enabling Thailand to compete effectively in the global marketplace. One aim of this education reform programme was to achieve development of students' criticality which is considered the essence of higher education in an era of globalisation. The reform aims to move from predominantly lower order and mechanical learning for examinations to developing the students' capacity, skills, dispositions and values to deal with the rapid changes in the information age. In addition, its aim was to provide training in thinking processes and the application of knowledge for solving

problems. It was designed to organise activities that would allow learners to draw from experience and would enable them to think critically (Office of the National Education Commission, 1999).

However, the accomplishment of this educational goal in criticality development in Thai students is not easy due to some aspects of Thai culture and values concerning education. Rung Kaewdang, Secretary General of the Office of the National Education Commission (ONEC), commented on the traditional pedagogy of Thai education, 'chalk and talk' and rote learning that it provides 'knowledge that is not relevant to the needs of the learner of the community. We do not want machine-like human beings or a walking dictionary' (Kaewdang, no date). The importance of critical thinking in Thai educational system is further emphasised by Kaewdang (no date) as he further argues that

the old education system is not entirely bad. But in the age of information technology advance and the world competition, education should not be restrained only to the classroom and teachers are not the sole knowledge source. Education must aim at cultivating within students the skills of searching knowledge through self-learning so that they can learn continually at any time and any place throughout lives. (p. 8)

Fisher (2001) also agrees that 'a successful society will be a thinking society in which the capacities for lifelong learning of its citizens are most fully realised' (p. 8). Therefore, it is not surprising to see many teachers across Thailand trying to translate the government's policies and guidelines in the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) into learning models, learning objectives and classroom method. The main focus in the new curriculum emphasises authentic experience which enables students to think critically, acquire reading habits and a constant enthusiasm for knowledge (Ministry of Education, 2004). Consequently, critical thinking is discussed widely as one of the important concepts in order to reach one of the goals of educational reform in Thai education. Not only is critical thinking stated in the holistic

picture of educational reform, it is a crucial skill promoted in specific courses such as literature.

In my view, what is needed in Thai education and Thai society is students who can preserve the traditional Thai culture of being polite, humble and respectful to elders (parents and teachers) and who at the same time are able to reflect critically and have opinions or ideas about things around them and can take critical action based upon their own reflections. Being critical does not necessarily mean being aggressive in the same way that being a 'good Thai person' does not necessarily mean being silent, subservient and obedient. However, this is a major challenge given the characteristics of the Thai educational system that is rooted in Thai society, as mentioned earlier. Retaining Thai cultural norms, values, and characteristics together with encouraging critical thinking development in Thai students is a challenging issue in Thai education. Thus, it is necessary to have propositions for the adoption of teaching approaches that will foster the development of criticality in students and this will be explored in the following chapters.

## **Conclusions**

We can see that in the context of religion, Thai culture and values, and the educational system, both teachers and students are caught in the tensions between attempts to promote criticality and the need to maintain Thai culture despite its ongoing change at present. Therefore, it is very important to investigate the perception and expectations of criticality as well as the teaching approaches of the teachers when attempting to promote the student's criticality in the literature classroom. Besides the students' perception and awareness of criticality and of their own methods of thinking, it is also necessary to subject them to examination, since it may encourage the students to realise the importance of criticality. Problems of criticality development in literature students in the Thai context also result from their limitation in knowledge transfer, as context has a vital influence on the learning and transferring of knowledge which has a direct bearing on the

practice of criticality. Volet (1999) proposes that 'once a person understands the physical cognitive, and social functionalities of a community, positive feelings and emotional adjustments will follow suit' (p. 627). Apart from the cultural context, an individual's cognition, motivations, feeling and emotions are essential factors in the individuals' transfer of knowledge. Thai students in English literature classrooms are facing the situation of learning across a culture which, as a result, leads to the issue of knowledge transfer and the practice of criticality development in the classroom. However, these challenging issues can be solved with the support of the three benevolent factors which are religion, Thai culture and values, and the educational system. I will argue that with all the supportive factors in Thai culture, criticality is achievable in Thai people. Encouraging Thai people to realise the significant value of criticality is necessary as human resources with integrated criticality are vital to the country's development especially given the current problematic political situation in Thailand.

# **Chapter 4**

## **Research Methodology and Data Collection**

### **Introduction**

In this chapter, I will first present a rationale for employing a qualitative approach in an interpretive paradigm in conducting my research. Next, I will describe the process by which the case study approach was selected as the most appropriate form of qualitative research to achieve the aims and objectives of the research project. Thirdly, I will review the literature relating to case studies in their various forms. Fourthly, I will discuss my pilot study and justify the data collection methods selected for this research that is observation, interviews and documentation. I will then consider the ethical issues in data collection for the study. Finally, I will discuss the selected data analysis methods for this study.

The discussion in this chapter primarily relates to the aims of this study which are encapsulated in the following research questions:

1. How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature class?
2. How is criticality perceived by:
  - a) teachers, and
  - b) students in an English literature class?
3. What is the nature of criticality development in students?
  - a) How is the criticality of the students developed?
  - b) What role do the teachers play in fostering students' criticality?

- c) What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development?

## Research design

### Selection of research approach and research paradigm

The term paradigm was defined by Patton (1990) as 'a worldview, a general perspective, a way of breaking down the complexity of the real world' (p. 37). For Guba (1990) paradigm is 'a basic set of beliefs that guide actions' (p. 17). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) perceived paradigm as 'a systematic set of belief and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied' (p. 13). In order to achieve understanding in my study of criticality development in the literature classroom, I decided to adopt a qualitative approach rooted in the interpretive paradigm as a way of gaining insight through discovering meanings by improving comprehension of the whole. According to Smith and Heshusius (1986), the underlying assumption of interpretivism is that the whole needs to be examined in order to understand a phenomenon. Cohen *et al.* (2006) also propose that the central attempt in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. In order to maintain the truth of the phenomena being explored, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within (p. 22).

According to Rossman and Rallis (1998), interpretivists are critical of positivism. This is because positivism can miss important aspects of a comprehensive understanding of the whole due to its practice in collecting and analysing data from parts of a phenomenon. For interpretivism, there are multiple realities, not single realities of phenomena, and these realities can vary according to different settings. Thus, adopting a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm is suitable to explore the richness, depth, complexity and multiple realities of phenomena in my research which is

explaining the development of criticality in the literature classroom in a specific context of a Thai university.

### **Qualitative approach**

According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), a qualitative approach is derived from the interpretive tradition of social enquiry. This approach seeks to replace the scientific notions of explanation, prediction and control of positivism with interpretive notions of understanding, meaning and action. For the interpretive paradigm, social reality is created and sustained through the subjective experience of people involved in communication (Morgan, 1980). Carr and Kemmis write that the main aim of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the world of those who are being researched and the purpose of interpretive social science is to 'reveal the meaning of particular forms of social life by systematically articulating the subjective-meaning structures governing the way in which typical individuals act in typical situations' (p. 90). It can be concluded that qualitative approaches and interpretivism are aligned with a 'subjective approach' to knowledge. This claim is supported by Beck (1993) as he claims that reality does not exist objectively and is always subjectively coloured with needs and interests.

A clear definition of qualitative research regarding its involvement with the interpretive paradigm is made by Brewer and Hunter (1989). They state that qualitative research is inherently multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. Qualitative researchers seek to study things in their natural setting and attempt to understand or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings revealed in the setting. Qualitative research involves the utilisation and collection of a variety of empirical materials, case study, personal experience, introspection, life story interview, observation, and texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individual lives. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) assert that the combination of various methods in a single study leads to the

richness of qualitative data and is best understood as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to any study (p. 2).

For Cresswell (1994) qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The research builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports detailed views of informants, and conducts the study in a natural setting. This means that the topics for study focus on everyday activity as 'defined, enacted, smoothed, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines' (Van Maanen, 1983, p. 255). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that the emphasis of qualitative study is drawn upon its rich, in-depth, vivid, unique descriptions rather than the issue of generalisability. In my case, the descriptions are of the teaching approaches that foster criticality development in the literature classroom and the teacher's and students' perception of criticality. The primary aim of qualitative study is to provide 'thick' description, or to address particularities, rather than to provide 'typical' accounts or generalisable findings.

### **The relationship between philosophy and research practice**

A paradigm is often characterised by the way researchers answer three metaphysical questions. These are the ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions (Guba, 1990; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The three types of questions can be considered the heart of the research act itself. In order to develop a research methodology, write Smith and Dainty (1991), researchers must examine their own beliefs and assumptions about the nature of knowledge and the phenomena being researched. The research methodology needs to be appropriate for the research question. These are questions of ontology and epistemology.

### **The ontological questions**

These questions focus on the form and nature of reality and what can be known. The example given by Guba and Lincoln (1994, cited in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994) is that if a 'real' world is assumed, then what can be known about it is 'how things really are' and 'how things really work' (p. 108). The foci are on the questions that relate to matters of 'real existence' and 'real action'. Thus, in selecting an inquiry paradigm, Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that the first question to be asked is the ontological question that asks what 'reality' is and what can be known about 'reality' (p. 108).

For my research, the ontological question is about the nature or relative reality of the criticality development situation in English literature teaching in the Thai University. What I want as a researcher is to understand teaching practice in the literature classroom in an actual existence i.e. in a literature classroom as a researcher not a teacher of the class in order to see the 'reality' of the situation in its actual existence. Moreover, I also intend to find out the actual action i.e. the teaching approaches that work in fostering students' criticality in the literature classroom without involving myself in the teaching practice in the classroom.

Regarding the aim of understanding the reality of teaching and learning practice in the literature classroom, it is clear that a qualitative approach in the interpretive paradigm can assist me in accomplishing my aim. In brief, the interpretive paradigm with the aim of understanding the students' perception of their criticality development in the literature classroom is the best answer to the ontological question in my research.

### **The epistemological questions**

The epistemological questions explore the nature of knowledge. The questions are about 'what is the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known?' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.

108). Guba and Lincoln suggest that no one answer can be given to this question. The answer is dependent on the answer to the ontological question. The researcher and the subject of the research are actually linked to the extent that research findings are created during the research. They further state that interpretive research requires the researcher to watch, listen, ask, record and examine. How this is done depends on the purpose of the research, which is in turn shaped by the researcher's paradigm (p. 108). The paradigm chosen for my research is interpretivism which argues that knowledge and reality do not have an objective or absolute value or, at the least, that we have no way of knowing this reality. The concept of reality is indicated by Van Glaserfeld (1995) as 'It is made up of the network of things and are relationships that we rely on in our living, and on which, we believe, others rely on, too' (p. 7). In this paradigm, researchers interpret and construct a reality based on their experiences and interactions with their environment. Rather than thinking of truth in term of a match to reality, Von Glaserfeld focuses instead on the notion of feasibility as he proposed that 'to the constructivist, concepts, models, theories, and so on are viable if they prove adequate in the contexts in which they were created' (p. 7). Under the ontology of constructivism, the epistemology of research is transactional and subjective (Van Glaserfeld, 1995). This means the researcher is linked to the subject of the research by the researcher's values or knowledge emerging from the research. The understanding of what the knowledge emerge from my research means the study of knowledge or epistemology.

The knowledge I expect to emerge from my research was constructed by my subjective interpretation based on close examination of 1) whether and how the teachers in the literature study are concerned with fostering criticality development in literature students, 2) what teaching approaches that foster the criticality development in English literature classroom are, 3) what and how the students perceive their criticality development in the literature classroom, and 4) what actually happens in the teaching and learning practices in literature class concerning the criticality development in the student. These kinds of knowledge may contribute to an effective research

outcome which results in the development of criticality in literature classroom and maybe other disciplines in general.

### **The methodological questions**

The methodological questions focus on the methodology used to collect and analyse data. These questions ask how the researcher will go about the research to find out whatever he or she believes can be known about. The methodology suitable for my research in the interpretive paradigm is a *case study*. My consideration in utilising case study as a qualitative research approach is according to Yin's (2003) *Case Study Research: Design and Method*. In this book, Yin states that 'the first and most important condition for differentiating among the various research strategies is to identify the type of research question being asked. 'How' and 'why' questions are likely to favour the use of case studies, experiments, or histories' (p. 45). More explanation is provided by Yin that 'this is because such questions deal with operational links needed to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence' (p. 45). Thus, adopting the case study as a research methodology in this study enabled me to find answer for the 'how' questions in my first and second research questions i.e. 1) *How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature classroom?*, and 2) *How is criticality perceived by teachers and students in an English literature classroom?*

The characteristics of case study which in examining contemporary events when the relevant behaviours cannot be manipulated is suitable for my research purposes since it deals with the classroom observation in which the investigator like me has little or no control. Apart from that, case study's unique strength in dealing with a full variety of evidence such as observation, interview, documents and artefacts (Yin, 2003) will enable me to obtain in-depth information in this research. With a primary focus on the real situation of what exactly happens in the literature classroom and the participants' perception and understanding of criticality development in the class, I consider case study as the most appropriate research method for my study.

## Research method

### Case study as a qualitative research approach

Merriam (1998) proposes that five traditions of qualitative research approach commonly found in education are *basic or generic qualitative study, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography* and *case study* (p. 11). As a form of qualitative research, case study is defined by its interest in the individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used. It draws attention to the question of what specifically can be learned from the case. Case study is used when researchers intend to support their argument by an in-depth analysis of a person, a group of persons, an organisation or a particular project. According to Nisbet and Watt (1984; cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000) case studies are 'strong in reality. They can catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale data (and) these unique features might hold the key to understand the situation' (p.184). The case study approach is not limited in value; rather, it provides an in-depth analysis of a specific problem. Although the results of case studies may not be generalised, 'they provide insights into other, similar situations and cases, thereby assisting interpretation of other similar cases' (Nisbet and Watt, 1984; cited in Cohen *et al.*, 2000, p. 184). Apart from that, case study results can also fit into theoretical explanation such as Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking which can be applied to many settings in the shape of theoretical principles. In brief, I consider case study as the research strategy best suits to the purpose, location and environment of my research in criticality development.

### Case study: definitions and characteristics

As a research strategy, the case study research approach is a technique for answering who, why and how question in a real-life situation over which the researcher has little control (Yin 1994, pp. 1-3). Its use of multiple sources of

evidence allows the researcher to provide a compelling argument as an answer to the questions. Case study is defined by many well-known researchers. Stake (1995) defines case study as 'an integrated system' (p. 2) which is a study of the particularity and complexity of a single case that leads to understanding of its activity within the broader view of circumstances.

Yin (2003) defines the case study research method as 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and which multiple sources of evidence are used' (p. 13). According to Yin, the case study allows an investigation to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events. Therefore, the case study approach is especially useful in situations where contextual conditions of the events being studied are critical and where the researcher has little or no control over the events. Merriam (1988), in her book of case studies in education, argues that case studies are a special kind of qualitative work that investigates a contextualised contemporary phenomenon within specified boundaries. The notion of case study as a 'bounded system' (p. 19) is also echoed by Smith (1978; cited in Merriam, 1988, p. 9) who argues that it is their focus on 'bounded system' that make qualitative case studies different. In line with Rossman and Rallis (1998), case study seeks to understand a larger phenomenon through close examination of a specific case and focuses on the particular. Case study is not only rich in its description and heuristic values, but also holistic and inductive in its nature. By providing details and complexity, case study can clarify the reader's understanding of the phenomenon and it also broadens understanding of some complex set of events or situations being studied (pp. 70-71).

### **Types of case study**

Yin (2003) has identified three specific types of case: *exploratory*, *explanatory*, and *descriptive*. An *exploratory* case study is aimed at defining the questions and hypotheses of a subsequent study or at determining the

feasibility of the desired research procedures. It explores situations where no single outcome is used to generate research or try out data collection methods or both. A *descriptive* case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context with an aim to give a narrative account of life as it is in social situation. In case study, the expected end product is a rich, 'thick' description of the phenomenon under study. An *explanatory* case study is suitable for doing causal studies. It presents data relating to cause-effect relationships, explaining how events happened and is also used to generate new theory or test an existing one. With these a study might be either single-case or multiple-case depending on the requirement. Almost any phenomenon can be examined by means of the case study method. Some researchers focus on a single case study because of its unique qualities whereas other researchers study multiple cases to make comparisons, build theory, and propose generalisations.

My study of the development of criticality in the literature classroom combines two types of case study types categorised by Yin i.e. *descriptive* and *explanatory*. It is a *descriptive case study* as the aim of the research is to present a complete description of the phenomenon of criticality development in an English literature classroom within the Thai context. The end product of this study is a rich and 'thick description' (Lincoln and Guba, 1985) of the English literature teachers' concerns to foster the criticality of students in term of the teaching approaches utilised by them in the literature classroom. Furthermore, another aim is to examine and describe how criticality in the students is developed and how they perceive their development of criticality.

Additionally, this research is an explanatory case study because of its purpose in explaining how criticality development happened in the literature classroom within Thai context. Another purpose is in generating a new theory. This research aims to help readers building their own theory about criticality development in literature classroom through the teachers' utilisation of their teaching approaches.

My research approach would be called an *ethnographic-type* as it is close to *the ethnographic case study*. According to McCleverty (1997), ethnography is a traditional method of sociology and cultural anthropology. It involves the study of people performing activities and interacting in complex social settings in order to obtain a qualitative understanding of these interactions. In his description for ethnography Stenhouse (1985) wrote:

A single case is studied in depth by participant observation supported by interview, after the manner of cultural or social anthropology...Of ethnographic case study it may be said that it calls into question the apparent understanding of the actors in the case and offers from the outsider's standpoint explanations that emphasise causal or structural patterns of which participants in the case are unaware. It does not generally relate directly to the practical needs of the actors in the case, though it may affect their perception and hence the tacit grounding of their actions. (p. 49)

According to Spradley (1979), in developing case studies using the ethnographic research approach, inferences are made from three sources: 1) from what people say; 2) from the way people act; and 3) from the artifacts people use. By using an ethnographic approach, I was able to develop understandings of what the teacher and students said from their interviews; what they actually did in the teaching and learning culture in the literature classroom through participant observation and the documentation collected from the fieldwork. Ethnographic type methods allowed me to get up close to my research participants. Spending time with teachers and students in the natural context of their classroom environment allowed me to watch, listen, and learn in the real life situation. Using an ethnographic type case study offered me opportunities to explore the complex situation in the classroom and build up my understandings concerning criticality development in the classroom. Moreover, the nature of ethnographic case study also fits my research questions which aim to elucidate the conceptualisation of criticality in a literature class; to investigate perceptions and expectations of criticality among the teachers and students in an English literature classroom; and to

examine the nature of criticality development in students and the significance of the teachers' role in fostering that development in the students.

According to Morrison (1998), the more I can be immersed within the group for a period of time, the more detailed information is usually collected during the research. He further states that such description facilitates the generation of 'thick descriptions' which lend themselves to accurate explanation and interpretation of events rather than relying on the researcher's own inferences. The use of ethnographic case study in my research is also aligned with my case study type which is a descriptive and explanatory case study. The more I can involve myself with the classroom the more it enables me to get a clearer understanding and description of the English literature teaching context in the class. This will consequently lead to a thorough causal explanation of the development of criticality through the utilisation of teaching approaches together with more comprehensive understanding about the teachers' and students' perception of the development of criticality in English literature studies.

### **Pilot study**

Before starting the main fieldwork, I carried out small scale pilot study for six weeks from November - December 2007 in order to validate the data collection instruments, to practise doing the data analysis, and to prepare myself for the main data collection exercise to be undertaken October 2008 - February 2009. I did the pilot study in the same university as my main study. My research participants were one Thai teacher, one American teacher from two English literature courses and nine voluntary second year English major students from each class. Each class was observed for six hours (three hours per week). During the observations, I took field notes together with audio and video recording. I also carried out interviews with the teachers and students. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. However, at the end of the pilot study, I decided to choose only the literature class of the American teacher. This class was chosen because I found out that the

attitude of the American teacher to critical thinking capacity of Thai students was interesting and challenging for the data analysis. Data analysis was carried out by reading and re-reading the data gathered in the interviews, classroom observation and documentation in order to look for emerging themes and see how the data related to the two theoretical framework, that is, Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. The complete version of my pilot study analysis is provided in Appendix M.

Conducting the pilot study was very beneficial to my main study in many respects. First, I learned how to use research instruments and how to conduct my main study appropriately. The pilot study gave me a chance to practise doing observations, taking field notes and conducting the interviews so that I could perform these data collection methods accurately in the main study. Next, it enabled me to choose an appropriate case study participant in my main fieldwork, that is I decided to choose a Thai teacher instead of an American teacher in my main study. This is because investigation of a Thai teacher provided more useful information about the Thai situation as regards criticality. Moreover, I learned about how to do a case study and data analysis. In my upgrading viva, the readers commented on the presentation of my data analysis, so I learned how to do the analysis of a case study research in a proper way by presenting more thick description of the cases in the data analysis

### **Context of the case**

Data in the main study was collected from two English literature classes i.e. *English Literature I* (pseudonym) and *English Literature II* (pseudonym), however, I decided to use only one set of data in this study i.e. *English Literature II* and discarded the other. Thus, actually, there were two teacher participants: a Thai teacher, Ajarn Sodsai (pseudonym) and an American teacher, Ajarn Mana (pseudonym). Each of them offered useful data from the insider and outsider perspective respectively. However, after I completed my

field work, I realised that Ajarn Sodsai represented a stronger case for my study than Ajarn Mana. This did not mean that Ajarn Mana provided nothing beneficial to my data analysis, but some of his ideas and practices were not as strong as Ajarn Sodsai's. Another reason is that during the semester, Ajarn Mana was seriously ill and he had to cancel classes several times and this led to the disruption of his teaching and also my observations. From the point of view of student participants, I decided to choose only two out of ten English major students from the Faculties of Education for the data analysis because the data collected from them were sufficiently rich and relevant to the data analysis. Apart from that, it was more valuable to analyse each of them in depth rather than focusing on the superficial analysis of a larger number of student participants.

*English Literature II* was provided as an elective course for the fifth year English major students in the Faculty of Education. This course was provided by the English Section, Department of Western Languages in the Faculty of Humanities at a public university in Thailand (the university name is not cited in order to preserve institutional anonymity).

The Faculty of Humanities offers a four year English curriculum of BA (English) which is a typical English program at undergraduate level in Thailand. The English major students do not only study literature. In the first year, all students are required to study general education units which provide fundamental knowledge in the fields of ethics, geography, psychology, computer information sciences and physical education. In their second year, the English major students are required to study three compulsory English literature courses which are *Introduction to English Literature*, *Introduction to English Prose* and *English Poetry I*. From their third year onwards, they have to choose to specialise in one of three fields: English for Specific Purposes, Language Skills or Literature.

The Faculty of Education offers a five year Education curriculum of B. Ed (English). In the same way as English major students from Faculty of

Humanities, in the first year, all students are required to study General Education units. In their second year, Education students majoring in English have to study the educational studies provided by their faculty as well as the three compulsory English literature courses provided by Faculty of Humanities: *Introduction to English Literature*, *Introduction to English Prose* and *English Poetry I*. In their third and fourth year, students do not have to choose their specialisation as the English major students from Faculty of Humanities. However, they have to study English courses provided in the three fields. In their fifth year, these students have to spend their time on teaching training. It is this group of students that I am looking at as my student participants.

## **Data collection methods**

In qualitative studies, there is a need for multiple types of evidence gathered from different sources, often using different data collection methods (Hatch, 2002). To gain rich and robust data from my case studies, I employed various data collection methods and procedures. This allowed for a richer account using data gathered from different perspectives to illuminate issues raised in the research questions.

Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) classified at least six primary sources of data for case study research: *documentation*, *archival records*, *interviews*, *direct observation*, *participant-observation*, and *physical artefacts*. It is noted that no single source has a complete advantage over all the others. Yin (2003) argues that 'the case study as a research strategy comprises an all encompassing method within the logic of design incorporating specific approaches to data collection and to data analysis (p. 13).

According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), case study relies on a multiple use of techniques for data gathering such as interviews, observation, document analysis and even surveys that are conducted over a period of time. In order to ensure that this study is well constructed with the case study

strategy, I adopted three main types of data collection methods: observation, interview and documentation.

## **Observation**

Observation is one of the main data collection methods adopted in this study. This method provides researchers with a chance to look at what is taking place *in situ* rather than second hand (Patton, 1990). According to Hatch (2002), the goal of observation is to understand the culture, setting, or social phenomenal being studied from the perspective of the participants. Additionally, according to Schwartz and Jacobs (1979; cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 73), observation also provides researchers with a chance to gain 'member's knowledge and consequently understand from the participants' point of view what motivated the participants to do what the researchers has observed them doing and what these acts meant at the time'. As Merriam (1998) explained, not only can observations provide researchers with some knowledge of the context, specific instances and so on as reference points for subsequent interviews, the researcher can also observe things which the observed would not have been willing to talk about or presumably might have forgotten or not realised to be important.

Use of observation also leads to greater rigour when combined with other methods of data gathering (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). Observation provides a context for understanding data collected through other methods. It helps researchers make sense of those other data. According to Mack *et al.*, (2005), researchers can use data collected through observation to improve the design of other methods, such as interviews and focus groups. In my study, I also used interviews with teacher and student participants in order to explore more deeply of their perspectives on criticality in literature classroom. This helped to ensure the cultural relevance and appropriateness of interview and focus group questions. This is valuable as a method to enhance cross-checking against information gathered through other means.

This method allowed me to observe the teacher's and student participants' actions of criticality development in their natural field setting i.e. a literature classroom. For instance, in classroom observation, after staying in the two classrooms over the first part of the semester, I had developed a very good knowledge of students' participation in class, how they responded to teachers' questions and so on. I could not possibly have gained such knowledge through interviews or document analysis. Thus, unlike interviews and questionnaires, observation overcomes the discrepancy between what people say they have done or will do, and what they actually did (Robson, 1993).

According to Patton (1990), observations provide a check on what is reported in interviews. Thus, conducting observations after the first interviews with teachers and students provided me with a chance to see the multiple realities of the classroom situation. It enabled me to observe what the teachers and students did in the classroom in relation to what they said to me in the interviews about their perceptions and understandings of criticality development in the literature classroom.

### **The stances of the observer**

No matter what participation approach is adopted in social research, in a sense, there will be an involvement of participation in it as 'we cannot study the social world without being part of it' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983). Thus, the degree to which the researcher is involved in participation in the culture under study makes a difference to the quality and amount of data they will collect. A description of participant observation is provided by Gold (1958; cited in Merriam, 1998; p. 100-01) in four possible observer field roles:

- the complete participant
- the participant as observer
- the observer-as-participant, and
- the complete observer.

Being a *complete participant*, a researcher is a member of the group being studied and conceals their group. This kind of observation may cause an ethical problem as the observer's role is concealed while they are participating as a member of the group. For the *participant as observer*, the researcher's observer activities are known to the group but it has to be subordinate to the researcher's role as a participant. The third type, *observer as participant*, differs from the second type as the researcher's observer activities are known to the group but he or she does not participate in those activities. The researcher will take the 'peripheral membership role' (Adler and Adler 1994, cited in Merriam, 1998, p. 101) to the group. The last type, the *complete observer*, the researcher maintains distance from the observed events in order to avoid influencing them. They may accomplish this by hiding from the group or by replacing the actual observation in the situation by videotaping (Flick, 2006).

In my research, I had the third observer field role i.e. *observer as participant*. This stance of observer was chosen in this research because it allowed me to attend to observe the class without taking part in the activities in the same way as the 'real' class members. In other words, it allowed me to be a 'spectator' in the real teaching and learning phenomenon. However, my identity as a researcher would be clear to all concerned. The teacher and students all knew my purpose. According to Scott and Usher (1996), in the case of classroom researchers, researchers are not supposed to do any teaching. What they are more likely to have to do is to sit at the back of the classroom and make notes, while at the same time accepting interruptions by students. The main role of the researcher in this stance is to collect data, and the group being studied is aware of the researcher's observation activities. In this way, I was an observer who was not a member of the group and who was generating a more complete understanding of the group's activities without interfering with what was going on in the class.

## Collecting data in observations

*English Literature II*, an elective literature class provided in a public university in Thailand was chosen as the target case for observation in this study. This classroom was selected to be observed in the second semester of the academic year 2008 (October 2008 to February 2009). The participants were a Thai teacher and 40 students. The information about the observed classes is provided in the following table:

Courses name	Number of hours per class	Number of teaching classes	Number of observed classes	Number of students
<b><i>English Literature II</i></b>	3	20	18	39

**Table 2 – List and information of the observed literature class**

The observation focused on teaching methods, learning practice and context, classroom environment, classroom activities, use of questions, students' participation and assessment method with the aims to examining the teachers' teaching approaches, and the students' learning practice and context. It aimed to investigate how these promote criticality development in students.

In order to lessen the teachers and students' feeling of interference, in every lesson I sat at the back of the classroom, observed what was going on in class and wrote down as much as possible in my field notes. Sometimes, I jotted down the exact utterance of teachers or students so that I could bring together my field notes with the lesson transcript. For every visit, I wrote reflective journals which often were interwoven with the field notes. I always tried to expand these field notes and journals as soon as possible after the observation while my memory was fresh.

As mentioned earlier in the previous section, taking a role of *observer as participant* allowed for richly detailed description in which the teachers and students' behaviours, intentions, situations and events were emphasised. It also provided opportunities for viewing or participating in unscheduled events in class which allowed me to enter into and understand the situation or context in the classroom. Observing and participating are integral to understanding the breadth and complexities of the situation (Mack, *et al*, 2005). Although some critics of observational research claim that it is very difficult to avoid the researcher's influence on the subject, according to Phillips (1985), the naturalness of the observer role, together with its non-participation, makes it the least noticeably intrusive of all research techniques as the data collection exists in natural, unstructured and flexible events in the classroom.

### **Supporting data collection methods in observation**

In order to strengthen the rigour and richness of the classroom observations, I adopted three data collection methods to support the observation. Those supporting data collection methods are *field notes*, *audio* and *video recordings*.

#### ***Field notes***

Together with observation, *field notes* were used to categorise and reference data so that it was readily available for successive data analysis. In this study, field notes were taken as comprehensively as possible, particularly in the earliest phases of research in order to get the whole picture of what was happening in the classrooms. Then, the records of what was observed in the classroom were written firstly in form of raw field notes which were converted into a research protocol later through a process of 'filling in' (Hatch, 2002, p. 77) the original notes. According to Hatch (2002), 'filling in' means going through the raw data as soon as possible after leaving the classroom and

making a more complete description based on the raw note and what is remembered from the setting and also some additional comments related to what was observed in the classes. Then, the 'filling-in' or complete field notes organised in full detail and using a systematic format became research protocols for analysis.

The systematic format for writing field notes for classroom observation in this study consisted of four parts: *context, actions, conversation and description and comment*. The *context* tells what the physical setting of the observation was like. It notes date, time, and place that the observed class was observed together with brief description of the activities in that class. The second part i.e. *actions* is the topics, activity or tasks and teaching methods utilised by the teachers in each class. The third part of field notes which is the most significant part is *conversation and description*. The conversation and description of each observed class was written in full detail together with some direct quotations from teachers and students. It is necessary to write the description of what was happening in class in full detail because the detailed data, verbatim accounts of events and conversation are data that are useful for generating analysis and interpretations. For the last part, the researcher's *comments* or reflections on events that occurred in the classroom were written down at the end of each observation. After each class all raw field notes were written up in full sentences as well as adding more comments in order to make the data ready to be analysed later in the stage of data analysis.

### ***Audio recording and video recording***

In order to support data recorded in classroom observation and field notes, I used high quality MP3 in *audio recording* in the observed classroom to record the teachers' lectures and conversations throughout the session. Moreover, I used *video recording* in the classroom in order to gain more vibrant description of the teaching and learning situation in the literature classroom in a Thai university. The video data gave a clear picture that could not be recorded perfectly by eye i.e. the gestures, non-verbal movements, action and

reactions of teachers and students in classrooms. Moreover, the video recording also provided evidence of the classroom setting, that is how large the room was, how the teacher taught or how the students were sitting in the classroom. At first, my plan was to do the video recording throughout the semester; however, the participant teacher politely refused to be recorded throughout that period and preferred to be recorded just for a short period which meant just three or four classes in total. In accordance with the teacher's requests, therefore I decided to do the recordings for four classes. Each recording recorded different types of classroom activities depending on the teaching plan of each teacher, so one recording was for a lecture, one was for student presentations, and so on. However, I ultimately decided not to use data from video recording for the data analysis as I realised that the collected data from other methods i.e. field notes, observations, and interviews are stronger and rich enough for the data analysis.

## **Interviews**

Interviews were selected as another appropriate data collection method that was used alongside other data collection methods in this study. According to Hatch (2002), using interviews in combination with observation will provide ways to explore more deeply participants' perspectives on actions observed by researchers. Apart from that, interviews also provide a deep penetration into events and experiences that have not been observed. The benefit of interviews in assisting in finding out what is in someone else's mind is clearly explained by Patton (1990) that:

We interview people to find out from them things we cannot observe... feelings, thoughts, and intentions... behaviours that took place at some previous point in time... situations that preclude the presence of an observer... how people organised the world and the meanings they attach to what goes on in the world-we ask people questions about those things. (p. 196)

According to Cohen *et al.* (2006, p. 268), the interview serves the following purposes: first, it may be used as the principal means of gathering information having direct bearing on the research objectives; second, it may be used to test hypotheses or to suggest new ones, or as an explanatory device to help identify variable and relationship, and third; the interview may be used in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking. Apart from that, Kerlinger (1970) suggests that interviews might be used to follow up unexpected results or to validate other methods or to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reason for responding as they do.

In my research, interviews were used to add to the richness of the class observation methods in order to go deeper into the perceptions and concerns of teachers about their utilisation of teaching approaches to foster criticality development in English literature classroom, and also to explore the perceptions and awareness of students about their criticality development in the literature classroom.

### **Types of interview**

Cohen *et al.* (2006) propose four types of interview used specifically as research tools: the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview and the focused interview. In *the structured interview* is one in which the content and procedures are organised in advance so the interviewer has little freedom to make modifications. For *the unstructured interview*, it is an open situation which has greater flexibility and freedom. Nevertheless, Cohen *et al.* suggest that it does not mean that the unstructured interview is a more casual practice; it also has to be carefully planned in its own way. *The non-directive interview* which is a research technique derives from the therapeutic or psychiatric interview and has some distinctive features of its own which are 'the minimal direction or control exhibited by the interviewer and the freedom the respondent has to express her subjective feeling as fully and as spontaneously as she chooses or is able' (Cohen *et al.*, 2006, p. 273). The last type of interview is *the focused interview*

in which their distinctive features focus on 'a respondent's subjective response to a known situation in which she has been involved prior to the interview' (Cohen *et al.*, 2006, p. 273). According to Robson (1996), focused interviews can be used where researchers want to investigate a particular situation, phenomenon or event. The individuals who have been involved in the situation will be selected to be interviewed. This method has an aim to go deeper into the motivations of respondents and their reasons for responding as they do (Cohen, *et al.* 2006).

### **My selected types of interviews**

In conducting the interview, I adopted Cohen *et al.*'s (2006) *non-directive interviews* and *focused interviews*. Non-directive interviews were used in the first interview with both teacher and student participants and focused interviews were used in the second interviews with all participants. The reason for using each type of interview is discussed in the following sections: teacher interviews and student interviews.

In this study, there were two sets of interview i.e. teacher interviews and students interviews. Each set of interviews was conducted twice: firstly at the beginning of the semester (before classroom observations) and secondly at the end of the semester (after classroom observations). Each interview was audio recorded using a high quality MP3 recorder and later transcribed verbatim for analysis. Each participant was provided with an informed consent form to read and sign before recording began. Participants were also made aware that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time they chose. I also made notes about my personal impressions and feelings from the interviews.

## Teacher interviews

I interviewed two teachers as previously mentioned, although I only used data from one in the final thesis. In the following section, I will only discuss the interview I used.

The participant in the teacher interviews was a Thai teacher, Ajarn Sodsai (pseudonym) from *English Literature II*. As stated above, there were two interviews with the participant teacher and both of the interviews were conducted in English according to the preference of the interviewee herself. Ajarn Sodsai, my teacher participant, is fluent in English as she graduated with a master's and a doctoral degree from a UK university, so there were no problems for her in speaking in English in the interviews.

The first interview with the teacher was *non-directive* and took about 1.5 hours. The interview was conducted individually prior to the classroom observation. The aim of this first interview was to answer my first and second research questions which are (1) *How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature classroom?*, and (2) *How is criticality perceived by teachers in an English literature classroom?* I also wanted to find out whether or not she perceived criticality to be part of her teaching aims. The interview consisted of five parts as follows:

1. general background information
2. perception of the importance of criticality in literary study
3. teachers' belief and attitude about students' ability to their criticality
4. teachers' teaching approach in literary studies
5. problems in fostering criticality development in the literature classroom.

The interview schedule and consent forms were given to the teacher participant prior to the interviews (See Appendix D - *Consent Forms for*

Teachers, and Appendix F - *Interview questions for teacher*). Then, there was the second *focused interview* at the end of the semester. This interview was shorter than the first interview (about 25 minutes) and was conducted informally after one of the observed classes. The aim of this focused interview was to elicit more in-depth information about some specific classes regarding the teacher's teaching approaches and activities designed for the students in classroom. In this interview some data from classroom observation and the questions from mid-term examinations were used to ask for reasons and opinions about the teaching practices utilised in the literature classroom.

### **Student interviews**

Another set of interviews was conducted with the fifth-year Education students majoring in English enrolled in *English Literature II*. There were ten volunteer students from *English Literature II*. The interviews were in the form of individual and pair interviews. The interviews took place in two stages, i.e. in the first half of the semester and then after the mid-term exam. I always ensured that the student interviewees were willing to take part and felt comfortable being interviewed. In order to maintain confidentiality for the students and make them feel comfortable, all interviews were carried out in a private room on campus. The interviews were conducted in Thai according to students' preference. Conducting an interview in Thai helped minimise inaccuracy and misunderstanding as the students' English was not fluent. I did a verbatim transcription of the interviews and translated them into English later on as a source for the data analysis.

The first interview with each student was a *non-directive interview* and took about 45 – 60 minutes. There were seven interviews with the fifth-year Education students enrolled in *English Literature II*: four individual interviews and three pair interviews. The student participants were asked to volunteer for the study. I asked for voluntary students because it is logical to choose people who are willing to participate and they would express their ideas and opinion eagerly. According to Morgan (1997), individual interviews have more

advantages over focus groups or pair interviews with regard to the amount of control that the interviewer has and the greater amount of information that each participant has time to share. By comparison, focus groups or pair interviews require greater attention from the interviewer in the role of the moderator and provide less depth and detail on the opinions and experiences of the participants. However, I still wanted to try both methods in my fieldwork in order to compare the richness of information and make a decision later on. At the first time of my contact with the students for making an appointment for the interviews, I asked the students whether they wanted to be in an individual or pair interview as I wanted the student participants to feel as comfortable and relaxed as they could all in the interviews. The following are the four sections of the interview questions:

1. students' skill and background in English literature study,
2. general attitude and impressions towards studying English literature
3. students' participation in class and their attitude to teaching methodologies
4. students' perception about the importance of criticality and the awareness of their own capability in criticality development

The aim of using a non-directive method in this interview was to examine students' understanding of criticality both in general and in relation to the study of literature. Another aim was to examine their perception and awareness of their own capacity for criticality development.

The second interview was a *focused interview*. There were ten interviews which were conducted individually. The questions were specifically about the students' opinions and personal reflections on teachers' teaching approaches in some specific classes, assignments, quizzes or examination (See Appendix H- *Second interview questions for the students*). The students were also asked about their perception of criticality development in the English literature classroom, about how they perceived it as developing in the literature

classroom, how they perceived their roles in criticality development, and what they thought about the likely long-term implications of such development in their lives.

### **Designing the interview questions**

Merriam (1988) suggested that 'the key to getting good data from interviewing is to ask good questions' (p. 78). Thus, it is necessary to design a good set of interview questions in order to gain meaningful and vigorous data from the interviewees. Hatch (2002, pp. 106-07) suggest several generalisations as a guide to set effective questions:

- questions should be open-ended
- question should use language that is familiar to informants
- question should be clear
- question should be neutral
- questions should respect informants and presume they have valuable knowledge, and
- questions should generate answers related to the objective of the research.

Apart from identifying the characteristics of good questions, it is necessary to identify the types of questions in order to generate the effective questions that suit the research aims and research questions. Berg (1998; cited in Hatch, 2002, pp. 102-03) divides interview questions into four types: *essential*, *extra*, *throw-away* and *probing questions*.

1. **Essential questions.** This type of question is the most important to data collection purposes of the interview as they are the questions that are concerned with the central focus of investigation. These questions are rarely asked at the beginning of the interview but may be asked scattered throughout.

2. **Extra questions.** They relate to essential questions but often used with different wording. When used with appropriate probe questions, extra questions can add to the depth and richness of interview data.
3. **Throw-away questions or background questions.** Usually this kind of question includes information about demographics, background, or context. They are used to start the conversation and put the informants at ease. Sometimes they are used to provide a break when interview becomes boring or intense.
4. **Prompts or probing questions.** They provide researchers with method to encourage the informants to talk more about particular subjects that arise in the interview.

Merriam (1988) suggests three types of questions that should be avoided in an interview: multiple questions, leading questions, and yes/no questions (p. 80). First, the interviewer should avoid the use of *multiple questions* – either one multiple question or series of single questions that does not allow the participants a chance to answer one by one. For example, ‘How do you feel about the staff and the course in this training programme?’ (Merriam, 1988, p. 80). Next, *leading questions* are suggested to be avoided as it will manipulate the participants to the researcher’s attitude or personal assumption. For example, ‘What emotional problems have you had since losing your job?’ (Merriam, 1988, p. 80). The last type of question that all researchers should avoid is the *yes/no questions* as they can lead to a dead-end, and can also slow the flow of information, especially with the shy, reluctant or silent participants.

I adopted the interview procedure suggested by Hatch (2002), Berg (1998) and Merriam (1988) in designing my interview questions and conducting the interviews in the study. For example, in the first part of my non-directive interview which concerned background information about the participants, I started with the throw-away or background questions suggested by Berg (1998) in order to get the conversation started, put the participants at ease

and gain their background information such as age, experience, education and so on. In so doing, I tried to avoid the yes/no questions and always tried to use open-ended questions so that the participants would feel free to contribute any of their personal information. For example, 'Why don't you start by telling me a little about your background or yourself?' Then, I listened for places where I could follow up with more specific or probing questions that show my interest such as 'Oh, your interest in literature started since you were in high school?' For the later parts of my non-directive interviews questions, which concerned the central focus of the study as they related to the perception, attitude, teaching and learning practices in the literature classroom, I turned to use Berg's essential and extra questions where appropriate. However, I did not strictly follow the interview schedule at all time. Instead, I tried to be flexible as much as possible with the order of questions so that the interviewees did not feel too stressed during the interview. Occasionally, I used probing questions in order to encourage the participants to talk more about particular subjects that arose. Throughout the interviews, I tried to avoid leading questions which would direct responses from the participants and tried to use open-ended questions to provide the participants with opportunities to take the direction they wanted.

In the second set of interviews i.e. the focused interviews with both teacher and student participants, I always tried to use essential and extra questions. My aim in this focused interview was to explore the motivations and reasons of the participants for what they perceived in any specific classes. As noted by Hatch (2002), essential questions 'have to get at the purpose of the study' (p. 105), thus, in the focused interview, I attempted to ask questions that were close to the central purpose of my study by asking more specific questions related to particular classes or events during the semester. An example of essential and extra questions with the student participants were like 'What do you think about the teaching method of the teacher in the tenth class, *The Boarding House*? How do you like it?' and 'Could you describe to me the situation when you apply the knowledge you learned from literature classes in your life outside the classroom?'

## **Documentary data**

Documentary data was data collected to corroborate and enhance evidence from other sources (Yin, 1994). This method includes finding significant information embedded in the documents of the phenomenon being studied. Merriam (1988) discussed various advantages of documentary data. For example, documentary data are used as secondary data sources to confirm findings based on data collected from interviews and observations in case sometimes what people say may differ from how they act. For example, in respect of the teacher, the written assignment, mid-term and final questions instead of multiple choices provided by Ajarn Sodsai helped confirm what she said in the interviews about her emphasis on students' ability to think critically in her course. The questions also gave insight into her minds and showed what she actually asked in the assignments and examinations. In respect of the students, the answers from students' assignments, mid-term and final examinations also illustrated their practice of criticality in a concrete way. Through their written answers in assignments and examinations, I could see not only their practice of criticality, but also their real capability in term of knowledge, ideas and language. For the issues of students' language capability, documentary data i.e. the assignments, examinations enabled me to see their limitations in English which affected the presentation of their critical ideas.

Additionally, documents do not only provide valuable information about the observed classes and the literature courses themselves, but they can stimulate thinking about important questions to pursue through more direct observations and interviewing. I realised that without the use of documentary data, I would miss some insightful information. For example, in my interviews with Naree and Kanda, I asked them the questions related to what they wrote in the assignments and examinations prior to the interview. The data I got from them enabled me to see not only the clearer depiction of their language ability, but also their opinion of the questions provided by Ajarn Sodsai.

Stability is one of the greatest advantages in using documentary data. Documentary data are objective sources of data compared to other forms (Merriam, 1988, p. 108). The collected data from documents cannot be affected by the presence of the researcher like those collected from the interview and observation. The information I got from course syllabus, students' assignments and examination paper were a product of the context in which they were produced which was grounded in reality.

However, like interviewing and observing, collecting documents also interfered with or affected the research setting. The reality of conducting research in class required the collection of some local or personal documents, which still involved some invasion into the teachers' or students' normal classroom life. Collecting such documents depended on the consent of the teachers and students. I had to ask participating students for their consent in allowing me to copy their assignments, tests and examination papers and also had to ask participating teachers for their consent in allowing me to collect their examination questions, course syllabus and teaching materials. Fortunately, all of them agreed to provide all requested documents.

In this research, the following documents were collected for analysis: course syllabi, teachers' handouts, text books, students' assignments, quizzes, mid-term and final examination papers. These documents were reviewed and collected as a means of interacting with the research participants in their natural setting, their own languages and on their own terms. The data collected from documentation as well as those from classroom observations and interviews were mainly analysed via application of the two main theoretical frameworks: Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality development and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework on the intellectual resources needed to accomplish critical thinking as mentioned in Chapter 3. In addition, the three literature teaching models were adopted as the supportive frameworks for data analysis in order to ascertain the relevance of literature studies and criticality development.

## **Ethical issues involved in data collection, data analysis and research dissemination**

Cresswell (2007) states that according to the nature of the tradition of inquiry, it is inevitable for qualitative research to face the ethical issues that come out during every step of conducting research i.e. data collection, data analysis and also dissemination. Because my research dealt closely with people, it was necessary for me as a researcher to be concerned with ethical issues particularly because the setting of my study was in the university which is my work place and the teacher participants were also my colleagues.

The ethical issues concerning the teacher participant, Ajarn Sodsai, were carefully considered. There would be a problem in maintaining confidentiality concerning Ajarn Sodsai as it might not be difficult for people in the English section to identify her as there were so few English literature teachers in the faculty. In order to address this problem, I tried my best to provide information about my research both verbally and in the information sheet given to her prior to the data collection. After that, I issued a consent form to Ajarn Sodsai which stated clearly that she would be referred to by a pseudonym. This form also made her aware of the type of information wanted from her, why the information was being sought, what purpose it would be put to, how she was expected to participate in the study, and how it would directly or indirectly affect her. In the consent letter, I assured her that information collected would be confidential and would be stored in a safe place. According to all provided information, Ajarn Sodsai willingly agreed to participate in my study.

In choosing her as my case study, I knew that she was a strong example of a teacher who wanted to make a contribution to the development of her teaching practice and the critical thinking practice of Thai students. Apart from that, her personal characteristics as an open-minded and easy going person was another reason that helped lessen my stress in reporting her interviews and teaching practice in my study. If I have to write a report of my study to the university after my graduation, although Ajarn Sodsai's identity may be known

by colleagues, I have tried to express it as generally as I can by not mentioning her personal information. It is also clear in my data analysis that I did not present any unconstructive information relating to her teaching and personality. The only negative point I will mention was her lack of formal written feedback to students' assignments. However, I stated clearly in the data analysis that this lack of feedback was due to her heavy teaching workload and the large number of students in class. My criticism of the problem of large class size was known and always discussed as one of the teaching problems in the faculty, so there should not be any negative consequences concerning Ajarn Sodsai's lack of formal written feedback for large numbers of students' in her literature class.

In terms of the student participants, the potential problems of ethical issues were power differentials between the students and me. Therefore, in the consent forms provided for them before the beginning of field work, I gave them the same information as Ajarn Sodsai relating to what they should know about my research. Both participant students, Naree and Kanda, volunteered to participate in my research with the full realisation that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time. The student participants were also clearly informed that this study would not harm them in any way and the information sought would not create anxiety or harassment to them. Moreover, I informed all the student participants the first time I contacted them about my role in this study that I would not be involved with any teaching or grading of the class. Thus, in my view, the issue of the power relationship between the students and me was not actually a major ethical problem in my study although they did know of my role as a member of staff.

As regard personal identification of research participants, DeWalt and DeWalt (2002) recommend that in order to protect participants' confidentiality, the researchers have to conceal personal characteristic of participants that could allow others to guess their identities. Thus, the two participant students in the data analysis have pseudonyms. In choosing two case study students from the total number of ten from whom data were gathered also increased the

difficulty of guessing their identities. Apart from that, both student participants could not be embarrassed in the university setting because they had already graduated last year before the completion of this study.

The last point of discussion in this section is ethical issue concerning researcher subjectivity. Hatch (2002) argues about qualitative research that its concern is both inner states as well as the outer expression of human activity. He further states that 'because these inner states are not directly observable, qualitative researchers must rely on subjective judgements to bring them to light' (p. 9). Thus, subjectivity is inevitable. Several qualitative researchers (Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Hamilton, 1994) have suggested that instead of trying to be objective, qualitative researchers should adopt a subjective stance by concentrating on applying their own subjectivity reflexively in ways that will support the understanding of the motives, practices and assumptions of their participants.

In this study, my subjective stance in being a Thai as well as a literature teacher was practiced throughout the data collection and the data analysis. However, this practice of subjectivity did not threaten an ethical position in data collection; instead, it played a significant role in providing me with a chance to see data vigorously and dynamically from the perspective of an insider in the context. This view was echoed by Parker (1999) as he claims that there is a difference between the nature of subjectivity and the merely subjective. Parker states that 'to put subjectivity at the heart of research may actually, paradoxically, bring us closer to objectivity than most traditional research which prides itself on being objective' (p. 85). My data was collected from multiple sources so that each of them would be evidence that helped reaffirm its rigour and richness. I scrutinised each in a disciplined process of examining each individually and alongside the data from other sources.

## Fieldwork data and data analysis

The following table presents the complete list of data collected from my fieldwork in a university in Thailand from October 2008 – February 2009.

Name of observed class:	English Literature II
Number of teacher participant:	1 teacher
Number of student participants:	10 students
Student's year of study:	Fifth year
Faculty and major:	English major, Faculty of Education
Duration of observation:	4 months

List of Data	Number
1. Audio recordings of teacher' Interviews	1 transcription of a formal interview 1 note from an informal interview talk)
2. Audio recordings of students' first interviews	2 transcriptions of an individual interview
3. Audio recordings of students' second interviews	2 transcriptions of an individual interview
4. Audio recordings of classroom observations	18 observations
5. Field notes of classroom observations	18 field notes
6. Students' tests and assignment - 10 tests x 2 students - 1 assignment x 2 students	20 tests 2 assignment
7. Students' mid-term exam papers	2 mid-term exam papers
8. Students' final exam papers	2 final exam papers
9. Teaching materials : complied text book	1 complied text book
10. Course syllabus and course description	1 course syllabus

**Table 3 – List of collected data from the fieldwork**

List of data collected from the case study teacher:

1. The first interview which took place before classroom observation
2. Course syllabus and text book
3. Classroom observations and field notes

4. Mid-term examination paper
5. The second interview which took place informally in the form of casual talk after a class
6. Video recordings
7. Final examination paper

List of data collected from the case study students:

1. The first interview which took place before classroom observations
2. Classroom observations and field notes throughout the semester
3. Two written assignments
4. Mid-term examination papers
5. Two written assignments
6. Video recordings of classroom observations
7. Final examination papers
8. The second interview which took place after the final examinations

## **Data analysis**

According to Yin (2003), in order to achieve rich data from a case study, the first important thing for all researchers is to have a general analytic strategy. My data analysis method is relying on both the theoretical position analysis strategy proposed by Yin (2003) and the inductive analysis of data. Among the three general strategies for analyzing case study evidence outlined by Yin (2003), I employed the 'relying on the theoretical proposition strategy' (p. 111) as one of my analytic strategies for this study. This strategy is to follow the theoretical propositions that not only led to my case study, shaped my data collection plan but also paved the way to my data analysis strategy. Thus, my analysis focused on the relationship of the data with two main theoretical

frameworks: Barnett's (1997) model for criticality development and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) resources necessary for critical thinking development with some development and modification where appropriate. Three main theoretical models in literature teaching were also employed as the basis of data analysis in this study. Those literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991) are the cultural model, the language model and the personal growth model. All of these were mentioned earlier in Chapter 2 (see also p. 41). This strategy also assisted me to focus the attention on certain data and also helped me to organise the entire case study together with defining alternative explanations to be examined. My original 'how' and 'why' research questions could be answered thoroughly by this data analytic strategy and also by looking at the themes emerged from the data.

Another data analysis strategy I employed in this study was the inductive analysis of data which looking at themes emerged from the data. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) make clear that qualitative data analysis is a practice of 'working with data, organising it, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others' (p. 145). For Cohen and Manion (2007), qualitative data analysis consists of 'organising, accounting for and explaining ideas' (p. 461). Similarly, Patton (1990) explains that qualitative researchers tend to use inductive analysis of data, meaning that the critical themes emerge out of the data. Hoepfl (2007) suggests that some creativity is also required in qualitative data analysis since its challenge is to place the raw data into logical, meaningful categories; to examine them in a holistic fashion; and to find a way to communicate this interpretation to others.

According to Cresswell (2007), the general process that researchers use for data analysis in qualitative research consists of three steps: first, preparing and organising the data for analysis; second, reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes; third, representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. Cresswell also addresses and discusses a more elaborated process of qualitative data analysis with the

focus on case study research which consisted of: data managing, reading and memorising, describing, classifying, interpreting, representing and visualising. Hatch (2002) provides five models of doing data analysis that novice qualitative researcher can adapt for their study: *typological, inductive, interpretive, political* and *polyvocal* (p. 151). In my data analysis, I selected *inductive analysis* as another analytic method.

According to Hatch (2002), inductive analysis is 'a search for patterns of meaning in data so that general statements about phenomena under investigation can be made' (p. 161). Potter (1996; cited in Hatch, 2002, p. 161) supports this idea by stating that inductive analysis begins with an examination of the particulars within data, moves to 'looking for patterns across individual observations, the arguing for those patterns as having the status of general explanatory statements'. The inductive model consists of nine steps (Hatch, 2002, p.161):

1. Read the data and identify frames of analysis
2. Create domains based on semantic relationships discovered within frames of analysis.
3. Identify salient domains, assign them a code, and put others aside
4. Reread data, refining salient domains and keeping a record of where relationships are found in the data
5. Decide if your domains are supported by the data and search data for examples that do not fit with or run counter to the relationship in your domains
6. Complete an analysis within domains
7. Search for themes across domains
8. Create a master outline expressing relationships within and among domains
9. Select data excerpts to support the elements of your outline

Hatch notes that this inductive model will not work with every kind of study, but it is well suited for studies that emphasised the discovery of cultural meaning from large data sets that include observational data. Thus, in my

view, this model is appropriate for my longitudinal case study with the detailed and extensive data and also aimed to discover the meaning and understanding of criticality development from complex data in a specific cultural context.

In my data analysis, I applied the theoretical models described above to the data and also analysed the data inductively in an iterative process of moving back and forth between the two to see which theme emerged.

### **Application of the two analysis methods**

In this section, I will explain how I applied the two data analysis methods to the data collected from my fieldwork.

I started the data analysis by looking at the two main theoretical frameworks of criticality and then the frameworks enabled me to conceptualise the data which was particularly beneficial to the critique of each framework that I perceived as inadequate and in need of additional refinement. In Chapter 8: Cross-case Analysis, I will discuss the inadequacy of Barnett's (1997) and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical frameworks. The application of the two data analysis methods to my study was conducted by writing the description of each case study which I started firstly with the teacher case study, Ajarn Sodsai (pseudonym) and then followed by the student cases, i.e. Naree (pseudonym) and Kanda (pseudonym) respectively. After the descriptive writing, I looked for themes emerging from the cases and categorised them in different topics. Then, I tried to apply the theoretical frameworks of Barnett (1997) and Bailin *et al.* (1999) to the emerging themes in each topic. Then, when there was no answer for any questions concerning any themes, I went back to see the descriptions again to look for further relevant data. All these methods were carried out as part of the compilation process during the data analysis. Although this study is confined to a small number of teachers and students, it provided insight into the way in which criticality developed in the literature classroom through the use of teaching approaches together with

teaching and learning context and practice. The principles underlying this criticality development may be potentially applied and tested in other academic disciplines in the future.

### **Three stages of the data presentation**

I divided the data analysis into three main stages and each of them will be presented as separate chapters in this thesis.

**Stage One** is the analysis of a female case study teacher, Ajarn Sodsai, from *English Literature II*. The case study teacher was analysed using all data collected relating to her throughout the semester.

**Stage Two** is the analysis of two female case study students from *English Literature II*, Naree and Kanda. They represented a case of an outstanding and an average student from the course. In the same way with the case study teacher, the case study students were analysed by using all data collected from them throughout the semester.

**Stage Three** is the synthesis and comparison of the two previous stages of analysis in order to see the holistic picture of criticality development in the literature classroom. The analysed data from the first two stages were analysed again in form of a cross case analysis in order to answer the research questions. Cross case analysis enabled the comparison of the two student cases which would not be possible within a single case analysis. The case comparison can be made against predefined categories, in search of similarities and differences, or by classifying the data according to data sources. This stage aimed to draw out issues emerging from the data analysis of the cases presented in the thesis. The data analysis in this stage focused on main aspects which were (1) themes emerging from the data, (2) relationships between literature teaching approaches and the data, and (3) the application of the main theoretical frameworks: Barnett (1997) and Bailin

*et al.* (1999) to the data together with constructive comments and suggestions about how each framework could be amended.

## **Summary**

This chapter has examined the methodology and data collection used while conducting this research. A justification for employing a qualitative approach in an interpretive paradigm in this research has been explored. The process by which the case study approach was selected as the most appropriate form of qualitative research to achieve the aims and objectives of the research project together has been described. Reviews of literature relating to case study research in their various forms together with the discussion on the choice of case study, case selection and context of the case have been presented thoroughly as the next part. The central section of the chapter is devoted to the data collection methods selected for this research, that is, observation, interview and documentation together with the justification for adopting each method to collect data in this research study. Then there is a consideration of the ethical issues in data collection for this research. This chapter finished with a discussion on the selected data analysis methods for this study. Data obtained from three data collection methods will be analysed descriptively in the following three chapters.

# Chapter 5

## Data Analysis of Case Study Teacher:

### Ajarn Sodsai

#### Introduction

In this part of the data analysis, I will discuss a case study teacher, Ajarn Sodsai, in her literature class i.e. *English Literature II*. This is a pseudonym, and the name *Ajarn* in Thai means teacher or knowledge provider; while *Sodsai* is also a pseudonym. I will write the case study in a descriptive and chronological way according to the data collected throughout the whole semester. I will explore themes which emerged from the data sources presented in the section *Three stages of the data presentation* in the previous Chapter (see p. 129). This chapter will address the second research question i.e. *How is criticality perceived by teachers in an English literature class?* Additionally, it also addresses the third research question that is *What is the nature of criticality development in students?* in its respective sub-questions b) *What role do the teachers play in fostering students' criticality?* and c) *What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development?*

#### Background of the case study teacher

Ajarn Sodsai is a 34 year old teacher in the English section, Faculty of Humanities in a public university in Thailand. She attained her doctoral degree

in English literature teaching from a university in the UK. Ajarn Sodsai has been teaching English literature to undergraduates for eight years in this university. During the period of my data collection, the second semester of the academic year 2008/2009, Ajarn Sodsai taught *English Literature II* to the fifth year English major students from the Faculty of Education.

## **Ajarn Sodsai's characteristics**

Generally, Ajarn Sodsai is self-confident, active, friendly and open-minded in class. She always smiled when teaching and was enthusiastic, trying to give vivid explanations and illustrations of the stories she was teaching. These characteristics created a relaxed and friendly atmosphere in the classroom. Mostly, Ajarn Sodsai was an easygoing and good-tempered teacher. She always told the students jokes, and related amusing examples or interesting personal relevant examples that might well capture the students' interest in the texts. Moreover, she was also good at asking the students questions to encourage their participation and attention in class. These characteristics of Ajarn Sodsai encouraged the students to feel more relaxed and at ease in class which resulted in the students' tendency freely to share their ideas and opinions with her easily.

## **Course syllabus, *English Literature II***

*English Literature II* was an elective course for English major students both in the Faculty of Humanities and the Faculty of Education. The course syllabus consists of five parts: the course description, the aims of the course, the assessment scheme, the content of the course and the list of literary texts.

The *description for this course* was provided as follows:

In this course students study selected English Literature II and practise analysing and interpreting them critically. The content concentrates on 12

short stories written in the period of Modernism, Post-Modernism and Contemporary (i.e. the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present). Critical discussion and comparison are invited in relation to theme, plot, setting, characters and audience.

*The aims of this course*, as stated in the course syllabus, are that the students should be able to:

1. acquire the knowledge of and background to modern short stories, especially in terms of narrative techniques and writing styles through themes, plots, setting and characters
2. discover a variety of stories which involve the cultural background of Western authors, and analytically discuss the stories both in class and on papers
3. gain some reading techniques in order to understand the stories, explore the worlds they conjure up and find pleasure in reading.

*The assessment scheme* of this course is as follows:

Participation and attendance	10%
Assignments and class work	20%
Tests	15%
Reports and presentations	15%
Midterm Examination (writing)	20%
Final Examination (writing)	20%
Total	100%

(Course description, *English Literature II* 2008/9)

The three aims stated in the course syllabus of this course relate to the three theories of L2 rather than L1 literature teaching: the Stylistic approach, the Reader-response approach and the Language-based approach. The emphasis on the Stylistic approach, that aims to direct students' attention to aspects of language use to increase their understanding of the literary text and to see how linguistics forms in a literary text transmit messages to the readers, is stated in the first aim of the course requiring the students to

acknowledge 'narrative techniques and writing styles through themes, plots, setting and characters.' The second aim of the course is clearly related to the Reader-response approach which aims to enable the readers to generate a transaction between their personal experience and cultural background and create their own response from the literary text. The third aim of the course is related to the Language-based approach which aims to enable the students to access a text in a systematic and logical way in order to exemplify specific linguistic features in the way it requires the students to 'gain some reading techniques in order to understand the stories, explore the worlds they conjure up and find pleasure in reading.'

The first two aims not only primarily relate to the first domain of Barnett's (1997) framework i.e. critical knowledge, but also to the background knowledge resource which is the first intellectual resource to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework. Moreover, the second and third aims are linked to Barnett's second domain, i.e. critical self-reflection as students are required to 'discover a variety of stories which involve the cultural background of Western authors and analytically discuss the stories both in class and on paper' and 'understand the stories, explore the world they conjure up and find pleasure in reading'. Additionally, the latter part of the second aims i.e. '...analytically discuss the stories both in class and on papers' is closely related to the fourth intellectual resource in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework : Heuristics or knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically which also requires critical thinkers to 'make a discussion on a particular issue with others' (p.290).

*The content of the course* (contained within the syllabus) was developed as follows:

The content in this course will concentrate on the following 12 short stories written in the period of Modernism, Post-modernism and Contemporary (i.e. the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present). The stories will be analysed in detail. Discussion and comparisons will be invited in relation to theme, plot, setting, character and audience.

*The list of literary texts* which consists of the twelve short stories selected and complied as a course textbook are as follows:

1.	The Teacher	by Catherine Lim (1942 – Present)
2.	Why, Honey?	by Raymond Carver (1938 – 1988)
3.	Crickets	by Robert Olen Butler ( 1945 -)
4.	Mabel	by W. Somerset Maugham (1874 – 1965)
5.	A Bridegroom	by Ha Jin (1956 -)
6.	A Farmer and His Wife	by Pira Sudham (1942 -)
7.	A Family Supper	by Kazuo Ishiguro (1954 -)
8.	Akueke	by Chinua Achebe (1930-)
9.	The Boarding House	by James Joyce (1882 – 1941)
10.	Sun and Moon	by Katherine Mansfield (1888 – 1923)
11.	Sredni Vashtar	by Saki (1870 – 1916)
12.	The Killers	by Ernest Hemingway (1898 – 1961)

From the course content and the list of literary texts provided in the course syllabus, we can see that Ajarn Sodsai selected the twelve stories mainly according to their period i.e. Modernism (1900 – 1950), Post-modernism (1950 – present) and Contemporary (1970 – present) (that is from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to present<sup>1</sup>).

In the first interview with her, Ajarn Sodsai further explained that apart from focusing on the different periods of the short stories, she also intended to focus on the diversity of concerns particularly in the difference in style, cultural background, literary tradition and social setting. The selected authors come from diverse cultural backgrounds: America, China, England, Ireland, Japan, Nigeria and South Africa. All this diversity makes the stories rich in a variety of concerns, viewpoints and literary traditions which provided the students with a good opportunity to learn the difference in the way these authors adapted the genre of the short story to their own particular style. The wide range of diverse settings of the stories from poverty-stricken rural areas,

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<sup>1</sup> Scholars have divided English literature into periods for convenience, so in reality the periods in English literature overlap. The numbers, dates or the names of the periods sometimes vary.

heavily industrialised urban areas, and high-society to the plains around the world provided students with a good chance to compare and contrast, make critical analysis and gain wider insight into those periods and each writer's perspective.

According to the content of the course and her rationale for text selection mentioned in the interview, it seems that Ajarn Sodsai's focus was primarily on the cultural aspects and the reader-response approach to the literary text rather than on stylistics or on the use of language in the selected literary work as stated in the three aims of the course. However, as we shall see in the following section, her practice did not always align with the aims of the course stated in the course syllabus.

## **The classroom observations**

The classroom observations were conducted in *English Literature II* throughout the second semester of the academic year 2008/09.

### **Teaching approaches**

The first observed lesson began with Ajarn Sodsai providing detailed information about the course, *English Literature II* to her students. This introductory class continued for a short period and ended with the students being assigned to read the first story, *The Teacher* by Catherine Lim, and do pre-reading exercises. The usefulness of these pre-reading exercises towards criticality development in the students will be discussed in detail in the section *Written assignments before the mid-term examinations* (See p. 160). In her next class, Ajarn Sodsai started by asking the students about the story that they had been assigned to read. She called students' attention to the story by asking them a question about any experiences they had had with their teachers. The question was asked in a friendly tone that encouraged the students to feel relaxed and eager to participate.

Ajarn Sodsai Have you ever had any good or bad experiences with your teacher?

Students [silent]

Ajarn Sodsai Let's share with your friends.

Students [silent]

Ajarn Sodsai Umm, if you cannot think about any bad experiences with your teacher, perhaps you can share the good experiences that you had with me in the previous course that you took with me.

Students [laugh]

(Observation 2 - *The Teacher*)

At first, the class was silent and students did not answer that question. Then, after the friendly encouraging sentences from the teacher and her smiling face, students started to laugh and talk with each other. Then, one started to answer the question openly in front of the class by raising her hand to answer. This practice illustrated the good relationship between the teacher and students in this class. In general, Thai students seldom willingly answer questions in class by voluntarily raising their hands like this unless called by the teacher to answer those questions. This is probably due to Thai cultural characteristic of *kreng jai* and *saving face* as mentioned in the section *Thai culture and values* in Chapter 3 (see p. 73). We can see that, according to her personal characteristics, Ajarn Sodsai could counter the students' traditional behaviour and encourage them to talk and feel at ease in class. This feeling at ease released them from stress and worry about the relationship with the teacher as usually occurs in typical Thai classrooms. This kind of feeling might encourage students to feel freer to think more in class which eventually related to the students' ability to think critically. From this point we can see that besides Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approach, her personality and characteristics were also influential in the development of student's criticality in the classroom.

Ajarn Sodsai usually started her class by asking short and open-ended questions which called for the student's opinions. This was followed by a lecture on the story they were studying in that class. The lecture lasted 10-15

minutes and was followed by whole class discussion and sometimes group discussion for approximately 15-20 minutes, depending on the students' participation in the discussion. It is noticeable that, apart from lectures on the background of the author and culture of the story, Ajarn Sodsai always asked the students questions throughout every class during my period of observation. As mentioned previously, the questions she asked were usually open-ended question such as 'what', 'why' and 'how'. For example, 'What does Tan Geok Peng (the main character in the story) want to say in her essay, *My Ambition*?' 'Why do you think so? Give me some points from the story to support what you think'. These kinds of questions helped the students not only to follow the story step by step but also encouraged them to think more critically about important details in the story. An example can be seen in the following conversation in class:

Ajarn Sodsai Do you have any idea why this story is entitled *The Teacher* instead of *The Student*, as its main character seems to be the student herself?

Students (silent)

Ajarn Sodsai C'mon. Just think about it. You all have finished reading the story, haven't you? So, just try sharing your ideas.

Naree I think that in fact the teacher is the main character as he is the one who is the cause of tragedy in the story.

Ajarn Sodsai How? Why do you think so?

(Observation 2 - *The Teacher*)

Ajarn Sodsai always gave vivid and elaborate explanation of the incidents in the story which is very useful for the students' understanding of the story. Moreover, she always tried to encourage the students, who are all from the Faculty of Education, to share their experiences of teaching practice. This method fitted well with the first story which was about the relationship between a teacher and a student, Tan Geog Pek, in a writing class. Thus, the students were eager to participate in class by discussing their teaching experiences with friends and sharing them in class.

Another clear example of Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approach which provides students with clear explanations , and encourages them to acquire Bailin et al.'s (1999) intellectual resource of background knowledge for the different culture ,was presented in the tenth class, *A Family Supper*. This story is about a Japanese family that encounters a communication difficulty between different generations. The father tries to encourage his son who is living in California to move back to Japan, but the son remains noncommittal about his plans. This family is recovering from the loss of their mother who died by eating fugu, a poisonous fish, due to politeness to a friend. This incident implied the faithfulness to Japanese tradition which is the thematic significance of the story. The father is in retirement because his business partner recently committed suicide, taking the whole family with him. In one scene of the story, the father relates the suicide of his business partner to the 'Kamikaze' or suicide attack by military aviator from the Japanese army during World War II. The author did not explicitly use the word 'Kamikaze' in the story, and Ajarn Sodsai tried to explain the practice of Japanese Kamikaze to the students in an interesting way. She started by asking a student to read the father's conversation in the story as follows:

Students E     “During the war I spent time on a ship rather like this. But my ambition was always the air force. I figured it like this. If your ship was struck by the enemy, all you could do was struggle in the water hoping for a lifeline. But in an aeroplane-well-there was always the final weapon”. He put the model back onto the table. “I don’t suppose you believe in war.”

Ajarn Sodsai    Anyone have an idea about what he said, ‘the final weapon’? What is it?

Students       (silent)

Ajarn Sodsai    Have you ever watched any movies about World War II? Or any movies concerning wartime? Let's say, the movies concerning Japanese army and World War II?

Student E      I think...Pearl Harbour

Ajarn Sodsai    That's it! Very good (smile). So, do you have any ideas about ‘the final weapon’ of the pilot?

Student F (in Thai) I think it is the way the Japanese pilots intentionally crash their aircraft into enemy ships. But, I can't think about the Japanese word for this suicide.

Ajarn Sodsai (in Thai) Excellent! I'll let you see this; perhaps it will remind you of that Japanese word.

(Classroom observation 10 – *A Family Supper*)

Then, Ajarn Sodsai presented access to the internet from the computer provided in the classroom and presented websites related to the Kamikaze to the students. While presenting the websites to the students, Ajarn Sodsai also explained the meaning and significance of this practice to Japanese military culture which worship loyalty and honour until death.

Further evidence of Ajarn Sodsai's practice of providing vivid and clear explanations for the students can also be seen in the eleventh classroom observation, on the story *Crickets*. In this session a student asked Ajarn Sodsai about the description of Autumn:

Naree This story writes much about Autumn. Could you please tell me what Autumn is like? I have never seen it before.

Ajarn Sodsai [Smile] For me, Autumn is the most beautiful and romantic season. I like the changing colour of trees and leaves. It is the time when green turns red, brown and yellow. At that time Summer has gone and the chill of winter is coming. Everywhere looks serene, calm and peaceful. Naree, you have a good notice that this story writes much to Autumn. So, how do you think about the relationship of Autumn to the story? Does Autumn imply something in the story?

(Classroom observation 11 – *Crickets*)

From the example, we can also see Ajarn Sodsai's use of follow up question which can help Naree to practise other intellectual resources: knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind. Ajarn Sodsai's

follow up questions i.e. 'How do you think about the relationship of Autumn to the story?' and 'Does Autumn imply something in the story?' provided Naree an opportunity 'to make a discussion on a particular issue with others' (Bailin et al., 1999, p. 290) which is a knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically. In answering the questions, Naree could also develop her attitudes and habits of mind that disposed her to think critically.

Throughout the semester, Ajarn Sodsai tried her best to use a variety of teaching methods in her classes. During the first few sessions of her course, she assigned the students to do the individual pre-reading exercises at home and set up a class discussion on the exercises later. In the middle of the semester, she began to assign the students to do pair work discussions followed by group discussion. At the end of the semester, Ajarn Sodsai assigned the students to perform a play on one selected short story, *The Boarding House* by James Joyce, one of the short stories that they studied during that semester. This is the kind of integrated work that the whole class had to do together. The students had to take full responsibility for the complete production of the play such as writing the script, casting the performers, setting the stage and so on. In my view, this task was very practical and helpful in encouraging the students to be active both in the presentation of their ideas and actions.

### **Uses of language in the classroom and students' participation problems**

Mostly, Ajarn Sodsai used English in class to lecture and to ask questions of the students. It was only to give explanations about the meaning of some difficult vocabulary or some complicated points in the story that she switched to Thai. Sometimes, when she wanted to talk to students about general topics aside from the lesson, Ajarn Sodsai also used Thai instead of English. I noticed that when the lecture was delivered entirely in English, some of the students especially those sitting at the back or at the side of the classroom did not wholly pay attention or participate. Some were reading material with nothing to do with the lesson at all and others sometimes chatting with one

another. However, when the teacher switched to Thai, the students looked more enthusiastic about listening and started to pay more attention to the lecture. They started to sit upright again and jot down what the teacher said in their notebooks.

In order to give the students an opportunity to practise their English speaking skills, Ajarn Sodsai always encouraged the students to use English as a means to communicate in class. However, it was not easy to do so, especially when the students wanted to answer, to share their ideas in class or when they discussed with friends. Using English led to problems of students' participation in class as it appeared that quite often they found difficulties in answering or sharing ideas in English. Ajarn Sodsai seemed to be aware of these language problems and tried to solve them by allowing the students to use Thai in class when appropriate. The students were satisfied with this and felt more comfortable about answering or participating in class. It is noticeable that the switch of language from English to Thai occurred when the topics of discussion and the teacher's questions dealt with sophisticated or unfamiliar topics to the students. It was difficult for the students to think about the English vocabulary and speak fluently in class. An example can be seen clearly in many classes such as in the tenth class, *A Family Supper* when Ajarn Sodsai tried to ask the students about the characteristics of the father, the main character in the story.

Ajarn Sodsai    What do you think about the characteristic of the father when reading these sentences described by his son in the story?  
                         Could someone please read the fifth paragraph on page 52 to your friends?

Student A    [volunteering] 'My father was a formidable-looking man with a large stony jaw and furious black eyebrows. I think how in retrospect that he much resembled Chou En-lai, although he would not have cherished such a comparison, being particularly proud of the pure Samurai blood that ran in the family. His general presence was not one which encouraged relaxed conversation, neither were things helped much by his

odd way of stating each remark as if it were the concluding one. In fact, as I sat opposite him that afternoon, a boyhood memory came back to me of the time he had struck me several times around the head for chatting like an old woman.

Ajarn Sodsai Can you find any words in these sentences that present the characteristics of the father in this story?

Student A From the word 'formidable'. Um...I'm not quite sure about the vocabulary. I can think of it in Thai, but I'm not quite sure for its meaning in English.

Ajarn Sodsai Don't worry, just try explaining it.

Student A He is fierce and violent.

Ajarn Sodsai Why?

Student A He hit the boy around the head 'for chatting like an old woman'.

Student B He has a kind of Samurai characteristic.

Ajarn Sodsai Good. What do you mean by 'Samurai characteristic'?

Student B Um... like we see on TV.

Ajarn Sodsai Carrying a long sword around and wearing Samurai dress, hmm?

Student B (*Laughing*) No, no, no. Not like that but I don't know how to explain it in English. It is too complicated for me to explain the characteristic of samurai in English. I can't think about the right vocabulary.

Ajarn Sodsai Okay, you can talk about it in Thai for this time.

Student B (*in Thai*) *He had pride and dignity for himself. Like the way Samurai always be so as we seen on TV and in Japanese comics. He was dreadful in his appearance and also a kind of introverted person who never expressed much of his feeling to his family. I could imagine how his son felt when sitting in front of him. If I were his son, I would also have had nothing to talk with the father about.*

(Observation 6 - *A Family Supper*)

According to Student B's transcription from the classroom observation above, it is clear that she felt more confident expressing her personal ideas and

opinions in her answer to the teacher in Thai. In my view, what the student said in Thai at this point provides positive evidence of critical reason and critical self-reflection.

## **The first interview with Ajarn Sodsai**

In this section, I will discuss four main themes emerging from my first interview with Ajarn Sodsai: 1) teacher's perception of the importance of criticality in literary study, 2) teachers' belief and attitude to students' ability to be critical, 3) teacher's teaching approaches in literary study and 4) problems in fostering criticality development in Thai context. The detailed information of this interview was previously discussed in Chapter 4, section *Teacher's interviews* (see p. 113).

### **Perception of the importance of criticality in literary study**

I started this part of the interview with a question about Ajarn Sodsai's perception of the importance of literature and its relation to critical thinking.

For Ajarn Sodsai:

Literature is not just a fiction. I think that actually it gives you all the skills necessary for studying English, but it depends on the way you present or the way that you propose it to the students. And most of all, literature can teach you all about life. It's about life. It's about people. It isn't the things that you can get directly from the text book. But it's the thing that the students can get to apply in their lives after their graduation. I think it is very important.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

We can see that Ajarn Sodsai perceives literature as not only important in its significance to English study, but also in its significance to life. In her view, literature is related closely to life, a kind of life lesson the students could apply to their lives outside the university.

When asked about her perception of the importance of being critical in literary study, Ajarn Sodsai shared her idea that:

If we translate 'being critical' in Thai, it would have a negative meaning especially in Thai society. However, in my opinion, being critical doesn't mean so. If you would like to implement critical thinking into the students, you have to clarify its meaning to let them know that it is not an argument to criticise someone in a negative way. This is because according to Thai culture that you also know well that it is not a good way of practice to criticise someone. It is especially not good for us who are younger, who have lower status to criticise someone older or in higher status. But, in practice, you should explain to the students that the way of criticising is not that negative. It's just the way you show your point of view in a practical and reasonable way.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

However, she further stated that:

Critical thinking is a core of studying literature. It is very important to have critical thinking. I think it is a kind of endless learning. It is a lifelong learning. For me, to be critical is just like to make them more aware of what they are looking at and also going to link and apply it to their ways of life in general.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Ajarn Sodsai was aware of the significance of Thai traditional values i.e. the respect for seniority. However, she still realised the importance and value of being critical and tried to implement it in the students. Her teaching approach was related to the three domains i.e. the domain of knowledge, the self and the world in Barnett's (1997) model of levels and domains of criticality. The relation to these three domains can be seen in the way Ajarn Sodsai expected the students in her literature class to be 'more aware of what they are looking at and also able to link and apply it to their ways of life in general'. For Ajarn Sodsai, studying literature did not finish in class. She not only wanted the students to gain knowledge from the short stories they learned in class, but

also to apply that knowledge to understand themselves more and be able to apply it in form of critical action to their ways of life later on.

Ajarn Sodsai made an interesting comparison between presenting critical thinking and the angles of a pyramid that:

Presenting critical thinking is just the way you show your point of view. To the student, I let them think about climbing up a pyramid which has four angles. I told the students that in looking at something, you are probably on this angle of pyramid. Your friend is probably on another angle and that friend is at this angle. However, you're all looking at the same pyramid. Your objective or your aim is just to get past each angle and climb up to the top of the pyramid. And, then, you're going to see that, wow, actually, this is the same pyramid that has three different angles.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Her comparison of presenting critical thinking to the four angles of a pyramid can be seen as a linkage to the three different ways of looking at each domain in Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality. What Barnett wants from the students is the achievement of 'criticality' in order to become 'critical beings', with a way of knowing which goes beyond critical thinking, critical action and critical self-reflection. For Barnett, it is necessary to make the transition because we all live in a world in which individuals are required not only to engage critically with knowledge, but also with themselves and the world. The transition of the three domains is, thus, compatible to the four angles of a pyramid mentioned by Ajarn Sodsai. The climbing up to the top of the pyramid is like the state when the students go across Barnett's three domains of criticality and become a 'critical being' who is not critical in any single domain, but in all of them, in an integrated way.

She further compared the illustration of climbing up a pyramid to her teaching of English literature:

I said to my students that the way I read the story and analysed it this way, it is not just because I'm a thirty something woman but you are just a twenty something woman or man. But, it is just because we are from different backgrounds, so it is impossible that we're going to have everything completely similar. It is impossible to be so. The interesting thing that I'd like to get from this class is just to share our ideas and get to something new. You and I mix up the idea and then we're going to get a kind of new idea. In life, we just have to try something new.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

What she said about her aim in teaching the literature class i.e. 'to share our ideas and get to something new' can be well evidenced from the classroom observation. Ajarn Sodsai was always open to the students' opinions and points of view. She did not give an exact interpretation or meaning of what happened in the story. Instead, when the students could not interpret or understand the underlying idea or theme in the story, she always indirectly provided them with some hints or clues so that the students could find that underlying idea by themselves. For example,

Ajarn Sodsai What is the atmosphere of the story after you read the first three paragraphs?

Students [silent]

Ajarn Sodsai How do you feel when you read the opening paragraph? Do you notice anything or any words that the author tried to use to create the atmosphere of the story?

Student C I feel uncomfortable and scared.

Ajarn Sodsai Why so?

Student C It opened the story about deadly fish in Japan.

Ajarn Sodsai Good. Could you please give me a more exact example of words that you found making you feel so?

Student D '... at the time of my mother's death'

Ajarn Sodsai (laughing and smiling) Thank you. That's a good example. What else?

Student D In the first paragraph, 'The fish has held a special significance for me ever since my mother died through eating [one] once.'

Ajarn Sodsai Excellent! Anyone can find more examples? Think about other paragraphs.

Student C In the second paragraph.

Ajarn Sodsai What's in the second paragraph?

Student C It describes the poisonous effect of deadly fish clearer, 'Fugu poisoning is hideously painful and almost always fatal. If the fish has been eaten during the evening, the victim is usually overtaken by pain during sleep. He rolls about in agony for a few hours and is dead by morning'

Ajarn Sodsai After reading the first two paragraphs which created the feeling of uncomfortable and scary to you? How do you think about the overall atmosphere of the story?

Students [silent]

Ajarn Sodsai What is the atmosphere after you read the third paragraph? Do you notice any words that exactly present the atmosphere of the story?

(Observation 6 - *A Family Supper*)

### **Teacher's belief in and attitude towards students' ability to be critical**

When asked about her belief and attitude towards students' ability to be critical both in the literature class and in general, Ajarn Sodsai commented that:

I think everybody has the ability to be critical and to think critically. But it depends on the background, the culture, the characteristic of that person and whether these arouse that person to think and express his or her idea.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

It is clear that Ajarn Sodsai believed in the ability of the students to be critical. However, she added that this does not mean that every student can be critical effectively especially in the English literature class. This is because of many factors such as personal background, cultural background, personal characteristics and language skills. Ajarn Sodsai seemed to be aware of the students' problems related to expressing ideas and participating in class. In

her class, she always tried her best to encourage students to express their ideas and opinions through class discussion.

My job is to break that subconsciousness. It's like if you let them talk, it's a kind of freedom. It's a kind of free mind. When you are pressed, of course, you wouldn't be able to do anything because your ability was kept inside. But I do believe that everyone has that kind of capacity. So, for those who are very very silent in class, I do believe that person must have one kind of ability and it is a challenge for me that I have to get it out. And to get it out is not that I force that person, but I'd like to do something such as asking the questions or wait for the time and observe the reaction and try to think how can this silent person do a job which is suitable for him or herself.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Ajarn Sodsai asserted that her belief in students' ability came from her personal experience when she was a student.

I used to be in a class with the teacher who is very... I don't want to say that... she is narrow minded. I think she had already set up something in her mind when she came to class. I don't think that life has just only four choices like multiple choices. We don't have just only A, B, C or D. It's more than that. So, why we have to set up that kind of limitation in the students' minds? That's why you're going to see that all tests in my course are writing.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

According to my observation, Ajarn Sodsai was open-minded and flexible in her class. She always asked students questions that encouraged them to think. After that she used follow-up questions to let them give some evidence to support what they thought. She never told the students directly that their answers were wrong or incorrect, but she used the method of asking for other students' ideas instead.

Ajarn Sodsai Can anyone tell me about the characteristic of the son in the story?

Students (talk among themselves)

Ajarn Sodsai From your reading, what are the characteristics of the son in this story? C'mon, I'm sure that you know the answer. Just tell me.

Student A He is a liar.

Ajarn Sodsai Why do you think so?

Student A He always tells a lie to his mother when he wants to go out at night or when he doesn't want his mother know what he did.

Student B I think he never tells the truth to her at all.

Ajarn Sodsai Just only a liar? What else?

Student C He is an aggressive person.

Ajarn Sodsai Why so?

Student C I can see from the scene when he talked very impolitely to his mother. He yelled at her, shut the door loudly at her and threw things around every time he got angry.

Ajarn Sodsai Well, well, well... very good evidence to support what you think. How about his other characteristics? Anyone wants to give more ideas?

(Observation 3 – *Why, Honey?*)

Ajarn Sodsai told me that she did not like the idea of fixed answers in literature study as these kinds of answers always block students' development of ideas and critical thinking. Thus, when the students gave different interpretations or ideas for any questions, she did not consider them as incorrect.

For me, different answers can be good answers as long as they can give good evidence to support what they think. Students can criticise a story in a way they think is reasonable with enough evidence to convince me of what they think. The answer has already been the answer for itself because the students already have their own ideas. So, the marks come from the way they are going to give the supporting reasons or the supporting sentences in the writing.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Ajarn Sodsai believed that this way of teaching can help to encourage students' critical thinking capacity. It is because students are free from stress

and anxiety in class. They do not need to worry about giving the right or wrong answers. She further told me that students felt happy studying in her class because for this reason,

I still make contact with some students who have graduated. Some of them called and told me that 'I was very happy in your class. Sometimes, it reminds me that what I'm experiencing now is similar to that story, similar to this story.' I'm very happy to hear this. It is not only because they were happy in my class, but also because what I taught was useful to their lives. I think that somehow they can apply what they learned in class and that kind of thinking in their lives.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

According to the interview transcription, we can see Ajarn Sodsai's attempt to provide 'an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion' (Bailin *et al.*, 1999, p. 299) in her classroom. What she said in her last sentence might also relate to Barnett's (1997) second and third domains in his model for criticality, the domain of self and the world respectively, as she not only expected the students to gain knowledge from what they learned in class, but expected them to reflect and apply what they learned to their lives in the form of critical action later on.

### **Teachers' teaching approach in literary studies**

In her interview, Ajarn Sodsai stated that a good way to encourage critical thinking in the literature classroom is to create 'the atmosphere of curiosity'. This kind of atmosphere can arouse students to want to know more about the lesson they are studying and then think more critically about it in order to answer their curiosity.

In her class with the story, *Why, Honey?* it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai was trying to create an atmosphere of curiosity for the students. In this story, the

writer does not use any quotation marks in his writing, which is his personal technique to give a natural feeling like watching a movie. Ajarn Sodsai wanted her students to see the importance of this technique but she did not tell them directly. Instead, she let the students guess it by themselves by asking them questions to arouse their curiosity.

Like this morning, you can see that I don't tell the students directly that, 'Ok, Look! There is no quotation mark. But my point of teaching this story is that have you ever noticed that in the normal conversation in the book, you have quotation marks. And when there are no quotation marks how do you feel. It's like when you see a movie continuously. In the movie you don't have the quotation marks. This writer is trying to present his writing as we are seeing the movie. Then he creates imagination of the readers. I want the students to get that imagination by themselves when reading the story, but I just don't want to tell them directly.

I think the very difficult way to get the students thinking critically is that you cannot ask them to do that immediately ... Teachers should let the students feel curious and try to find the answers by themselves.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

However, Ajarn Sodsai further commented that this teaching practice is not easy to apply to Thai students. This is because of the Thai cultural background and traditional characteristics.

Westerners can probably criticise immediately, because it is in their subconsciousness, but this does not happen in Thai people. In Thailand, students probably get the answer but they don't know how to express it. This is because the process has been obstructed by the way they have been brought up. So, the duty of the teacher is to review the process. And the process does not come from you, but it belongs to the students. They just don't know how come they can get the answer. I believe that the students have the ability to think critically but they just don't know how to pull it out. They just don't know the process to develop their own capacity.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

This part of Ajarn Sodsai's comment on teaching practice and Thai cultural background and traditional characteristics can be related to what Bailin *et al.* (1999) proposed in their five intellectual resources needed to accomplish critical thinking. The intellectual resources related to what Ajarn Sodsai mentioned in her interview were the possession of critical concepts and certain habits of mind, shown by the way she commented that, 'In Thailand, students probably get the answer but they don't know how to express it. This is because the process has been obstructed by the way they have been brought up.'

According to Bailin *et al.*, in order to provide the five intellectual resources in students, three components in teaching critical thinking should be provided to the student. The three components are as follows:

1. engaging students in dealing with tasks that call for reasoned judgement or assessment
2. helping them develop intellectual resources dealing with these tasks
3. providing an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempted to think critically and engage in critical discussion. (p. 299)

All these three components were practised by Ajarn Sodsai. She realised that it is the duty of the teacher in encouraging the student's ability to think critically and she tried to provide the three components proposed by Bailin *et al.* in order to foster critical thinking in the students in her class. What Ajarn Sodsai tried to do in her teaching practice corresponded to the idea of Brumfit (1985) in literature teaching that 'the most valuable literature enabled students to define themselves 'through contact with others' experience', and the task of the educator was fundamentally to create conditions that enabled this contact in the best possible ways'(p. 92).

Ajarn Sodsai further stated that, in her teaching approach, she considered it more student-centred than teacher-centred.

I prefer my class to be a student-centred one. It is because I enjoy their answers more than my answers. I try to give my own answer as the last answer. I think that the first impression in everything is important and influential. I don't want my answer to be their first impression, but I would like them to feel impressive in themselves first. They have to be proud of their answers. They have to be proud of the way they create things. What a teacher should do in his or her class is to give them inspiration, to give them self-motivation so that they can move on and find something suitable and valuable for themselves later.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

In my observation in her twelfth class, *A Farmer and his Wife*, Ajarn Sodsai's teaching methods of asking open-ended questions to create an atmosphere of curiosity can be illustrated by this excerpt from that class

Ajarn Sodsai How do you feel after reading this story? How do you like it?

Student A For me, it is quite easier than the previous stories I had read.

Ajarn Sodsai Very good! Why do you feel that it is quite easier? Does it mean you start to enjoy reading literature now so that you felt that is easier to read?

Student A It is easier for me than other stories because it is the story about Thai farmers. The context is more familiar for me to understand.

Ajarn Sodsai Well, as you mentioned about the context, how do you picture Esarn [the north east of Thailand]?

Students [silent]

Ajarn Sodsai Anyone want to share ideas with your friend?

Student B There are many problems in Esarn since the past until present. Those problems can never be solved.

Ajarn Sodsai Good answer. What are those problems? Could you give more examples on this?

Student B Social problems such as poverty and drought.

Ajarn Sodsai Could you please give me any evidences from the story to support your idea?

It is clear that Ajarn Sodsai tried to provide 'an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion', as recommended by Bailin *et al.* (1999, p. 299).

### **Problems in fostering criticality development in the Thai context**

The final part of my first interview with Ajarn Sodsai was about the problems in fostering criticality development in the Thai context. In her view, Ajarn Sodsai did not think that Thai students had problems with criticality development as she said that

It depends on how you define the word 'problem'. If you think that the way students don't talk is a problem, it is. For me, it is not. It's natural to be so. It's natural that they aren't going to speak out. Like we have already discussed, they've been taught like this for a long long time. They were forced to answer just only one set up answer. So, the thing is that I don't think it is a problem. I think that everything that happens in class is natural. But do they know that it's natural to be quiet like that? Sometimes, they have to learn that they cannot understand everything and that's natural. Your duty is not to blame them that why don't you understand. I understand this, but don't you understand? Your duty is to make them realise that sometimes you don't have to understand everything, but you can learn how to understand. That's going to create another atmosphere... a very good atmosphere in the class with the critical thinking.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

We can see that Ajarn Sodsai realised the influence of traditional Thai teaching practice on students' characteristics and learning practice in class which affected students' development of criticality. She also recognised the significance of being critical and of encouraging students to practise their criticality through her own teaching approaches, creating an atmosphere that supported the student's attempt to think critically.

Then, I asked her about the main factors that affect success in developing students' ability to be critical in the literature classroom. Ajarn Sodsai commented that it is necessary to create the students' trust in the audience by giving an illustration of the practice in Westerners,

Look at westerners. Why they can criticise this and that. It's just because they trust in the audiences. They have that kind of self-confidence that I'm not going to be blamed. I'm not going to be punished. If you can give that kind of trust in class that you are not going to give them low grades. You are not going to turn down or make them feel humiliated in front of their friends. Then you can get that.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

I do not agree with what Ajarn Sodsai stated about Westerners' characteristics of being critical, and should like to comment on this point. In my view, not all Westerners are so critical and self-confident that they criticise everything around them. It might be true that, according to their culture and educational system which are different from those of Thais, Westerners are brought up to be more open and self-confident than Thais, however, it does not mean that all Westerners are critical and all Thais are not at all critical. Each category has many sub-groups with different characteristics.

Ajarn Sodsai added that when applied to the classroom, 'the audience' which the students have to trust means 'the teacher' in their classroom. In order to be critical, apart from trusting the teacher, the students also have to trust themselves.

You have to make the students trust in you. But in order to do that, you have to make them trust in themselves first. When they trust in themselves, it means they trust in their own confidence, their own capacity, and then they're going to trust you. So, how can you do that? My method is being open to all answers, but not leading them to go to nowhere. It is like the way I told you about the pyramid. Even though you can't bring them up to the top of the pyramid that you expect them to reach, it doesn't mean that there is only one pyramid in the world. Because when they grew up, when you can get them to reach the top of the pyramid, they can see the horizon that they have to walk up there. The world is so huge and large.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

From the interview, we can see that 'self-confidence' and trust in the reactions of others is another important characteristic that is useful for the development of criticality in the students.

I further asked Ajarn Sodsai about her aim in teaching literature whether it related to criticality development in the students or not and she said that ,

My happiness or my aim is to get the students up there, at the top of the pyramid, and feel like...Oh! The world is so beautiful! Which direction should I go now? Which one I'm going to choose? I think that my teaching has been completed when the students are going to decide to do something by themselves. They're going to do the critical thinking and choose the way they want to go. Thus, my job is completed. My job is not that, hey, go to the left side, north or south. I always tell the students that I have one idea in my mind because of my personal background, but it doesn't mean that mine is good. The thing is that I want the students to see that someone is different from them. Can you accept me? If you don't, I'll respect you, but how about you? I let you know my point and how about yours? Why don't we exchange? Then you gonna see that you can create that kind of critical thinking in class.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Another important aspect is the effect of the Thai educational system on the development of ability to be critical in the students. I asked Ajarn Sodsai for her view on traditional Thai teaching and learning both in general and specifically in the literature classroom. Ajarn Sodsai commented that:

I think in Thai education we still give students too little openness. I mean mind openness. They have been taught with a kind of monologue and teacher-centred for nearly their entire lives from elementary school up to high school and university. Always, the teachers stand in front of the class, say something for two or three hours and go out. The teachers teach their students that way, but they expect them to talk, to discuss in groups, to do this and that, to do things that they've never been trained or taught. I think it

is really unfair. The teachers ask their students to be open for new ideas, but they give them multiple choice questions for more than ten years. How can they know how to write and to think for their own? You would like the students to think, but you always think for the students.

This is nothing to do with the curriculum. You can set up all kinds of curriculum, but what happens in class is the most important. Even though the course description says that it is full of discussion, but actually in reality, it's you who says or gives only lectures in class. You have never asked the students how they feel or think about what they are studying. You have never asked the students to come out in front of class, but you would like the students to speak elegantly and think critically in the public. How can you expect them to be critical? I don't really believe that.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

What Ajarn Sodsai said is true about the Thai educational system and, as a Thai teacher, I agree with her. Her comments were important, particularly those pertaining to the encouragement of students' criticality, with the most vital aspect being what actually happens in class, not what is written in documents.

Class size is another factor that Ajarn Sodsai mentioned in the interview.

One thing is that we cannot have 12 or 16 in class like in the West. We are not like that. We have thirty something up. But the thing is that, how can we manage that? This is the reality. You cannot apply the teaching methods of the westerners who have just only kind of seminar group because they don't have forty something students in class like us. We cannot apply that method in a big group like this. But the thing is that how can you integrate it in Thai class. I think we should start from letting them do the things that they're so familiar with first. It is to let them work individually. Then you just started to expand by ask them to work in pairs and then in groups later on. Then you switch from individual to pairs to groups so that they can feel that there are many ways to do this.

I do believe that this will help students in their studying, but it is not because of me. It is because of themselves. At least they must see the difference between working alone and working in pairs and working in groups. But probably they are not going to tell you why because we have never asked them. You have never asked them to write something and express their ideas. How can you know? I think that Thai education still gives the students too many limitations. So, I don't think it's fair for the students to be treated with all these limitations.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Ajarn Sodsai's comment on the effect of class size toward the development of ability to be critical in the students is appealing, because it is true to the real situations that I encountered throughout my several years of teaching experience. However, we have to be cautious about her generalisation about the small class size in the West as it is not absolutely true. There are still many classes at universities in the West such as in the UK with have large classes.

I further asked Ajarn Sodsai about the role of Thai culture especially the respect for seniority which has been considered an important characteristic of Thai people for its influence on criticality development in Thai students. Ajarn Sodsai had an interesting opinion on this point:

I don't say that we shouldn't listen to parents. From my opinion, I don't think this is a problem. Actually, it is a very very useful tool for them. It is going to lead them to their critical thinking. But what they need from the teachers is to give them a kind of 'click'. For example, this morning, you saw that a student say that she didn't want to do something against what her parents asked her to do. But, she said that she did it anyway in the end as she thought that she did not do something wrong. It is clear that this girl had a kind of critical thinking but she didn't say it. A 'click' that I told you is that you just tell the students that you don't have to follow everything your parents said as long as you made a careful consideration on what you are going to do. It means that she has gone through the process of critical thinking. She decided that she is

going to do that anyway because she thought it is right for her life. She can have her own idea about her way of life.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

Ajarn Sodsai also commented on the duty of teacher to guide the students to practise thinking critically about life,

The duty of teacher is to show them that, look, it doesn't mean that you are against your parents but it means that you have your own ideas. Your job is how can you go back and compromise with your parents. How can you explain to them and convince them in what you want to do? It means she has to get her own reason – a very good reason, a very logical reason in order to go back and explain so that her parents can accept those kinds of things. In my class, sometimes, you can see that I try to choose the theme which is close to students' lives. Actually, the theme is close to everybody's life because it is about humans. We are human so there are many angles of life that we can look at. So, this kind of thing that you gonna see – nothing is absolutely right or wrong. You can make the best decision that suits your life. That's it.

(Ajarn Sodsai Interview 1)

## **Written assignments before mid-term examinations**

Throughout the semester, the students were set 11 assignments: six before the mid-term examination and five before the final examinations. The assignments were in the form of short written passages and only one assignment in the form of a short essay. There were five open-ended questions for each assignment. The students were allowed to do all the assignments at home and hand them to the teacher after finishing each story. Ajarn Sodsai's practice in setting written assignments in her classes and in the examinations was clear from her first interview on page 135 with all the assignments in her course requiring long, written answers. This practice was considered unusual as classes in general tended to rely on multiple choices tests or examinations.

Apart from the 11 graded assignments, Ajarn Sodsai always provided pre-reading questions on the reading text for the students, as previously mentioned on page 131. The purpose of these questions was to help students and they were not graded. They were a kind of guided question before reading the story to help build up the students' interest and understanding in the story they were going to read. Examples of the pre-reading questions were as follows:

1. Before reading the story, try to answer the following questions:
2. What is a traditional dish in your country? Does it represent anything about your country?
3. While eating, what do your people do? Is their way of eating with families different from having meals with others or in the public?
4. How is the atmosphere of eating in your country?

(*A Family Supper*, by Kazuo Oshiguro)

These pre-reading questions can also be considered as pre-critical thinking questions as they encouraged the students to think about the relation of these questions to the story they were going to read. It enabled them to think more critically not only about the story itself but also with its relationship to the cultural background of the students themselves by asking the students to make the comparison between their own cultures with the different cultures they were going to read in the story. These pre-reading questions were provided for nine out of 12 stories and all questions stayed at the same level of difficulty throughout the semester. In my view, Ajarn Sodsai did not assign the pre-reading questions to become progressively more challenging probably because she wanted the students to feel relaxed and willing to answer the questions which were not too complicated for them at the early beginning of the story. This was a practical way of encouraging the students' practice of critical reasoning and critical self-reflection, as proposed in Barnett's framework of criticality

### **The first written assignment: *The Teacher***

The questions given in the assignments were in form of open-ended questions. For example,

Question 1: What is the teacher's attitude when he heard that Tan Geok Peng had committed suicide? Why do you think so?

Question 3: From the story, who do you think is responsible for Tan Geok Peng's death? Why?

Question 5: In your view, do you think a student can do such a tragic thing as Tan Geok Pen does in real life? Why/ Why not? Give reasons which support your answer.

These questions needed not only factual answers but also analysis and criticism from the students. We can see that the teacher required factual knowledge from the student by using the question words like 'what' and 'who'. However, she also required an answer with analytical and critical knowledge by using follow-up questions such as 'why', and 'why not'. This required the students to think critically in finding reasons for their answers. The statement like 'Give reasons which support your answer' was also provided to let the students provide evidence from the story to support their answers. This helps the students develop their critical ability.

When applying these questions to Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality, we can see that the questions provided in this written assignment could enable the students to reach level two in the domain of knowledge i.e. critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding) and self-reflection. The assignment questions required students to use critical thinking as a tool to understand life and the nature of any problems happening in their lives. The teacher requires her students to think critically to find out the cause of the problem and then reflect it in the form of seeking a suitable solution to solve them, as we can

see in Question 5, 'In your view, do you think a student can do such a tragic thing as Tan Geok Pen does in real life? Why/Why not?'

### **Later written assignments**

#### ***Why, Honey?***

Another example of written assignments before the mid-term examination also provided clear evidence that Ajarn Sodsai always gave critical questions to her students. In her assignment questions, she always used open-ended question words like 'why', 'why not' and 'how' or questions that ask for the students' ideas and opinions such as 'in your view' or 'what do you think about'. With the questions that asked for students' ideas and opinions, she also asked them to provide evidence from the story to support their answers. The example may be seen the second story, *Why, Honey?* :

Question 1: Why does the son always lie to his mother? Is it common for everybody to behave like that? Why/Why not?

Question 2: Why does the mother feel worried when she knows that her son has become a politician? Why is she afraid of him?

Question 3: What do you think about the relationship between the mother and the son? Does it affect the way the son behaves? Why/Why not?

Question 4: In your view, what makes the son become an aggressive and abusive character? Give reasons which support your answer.

#### ***A Family Supper***

The questions provided in the later written assignments set before the mid-term examination were not in the form of questions such as 'why' or 'how', as

in the previous assignments. These questions were more subtle and complicated, without the use of 'why' or 'how'. They asked more about the underlying meaning and careful interpretation of the story. However, these questions still encouraged the students to answer with critical and analytical ideas as usual. This can clearly be seen in Question 1 and 2, as follows:

Question 1: What connections, both symbolic and concrete, can you find between the pictures of the mother in a white kimono that is briefly brought to the supper table and the ghost woman wearing a white kimono at the well in the garden?

Question 2: What conceivable connection might there be between the reference to the potentially lethal fugu fish at the story's opening and the detailed description of the fish in the soup served at supper?

However, in this assignment, *A Family Supper*, the characteristics of questions were varied. For example, Questions 4 and 5 required a factual answer with the application of the students' personal experience and cultural background knowledge to answer it, as it asked about the cultural background of the Asian family. We can see that although these questions required a kind of factual answer, it is necessary for the students to answer it with critical thinking as in other questions in this assignment. They still had to provide the good reasons and evidence to support their answer. For example,

Question 4: What aspects of the interpersonal relationships among the family members in this story would you consider to be typically Japanese? Or typically Asian? Which might simply be peculiar to this family? What is the basis of your observation?

Question 5: Do you foresee either the narrator or Kikuko returning home to live with the father? How do you envision the rest of the father's life? Give evidence from the story to support your answer.

These questions require quite sophisticated cultural understanding and might be seen as encouraging students to develop an understanding of the pattern of life and interpersonal relationships rather than perceiving cultural norms as absolute. In order to achieve that understanding, it is necessary for the student to possess the intellectual resources such as background knowledge as proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999).

### **Short essay, *The Teacher***

There was only one short essay assigned for this course. The short essay was assigned after the third session of the semester for the first short story i.e. *The Teacher*. Ajarn Sodsai provided an extract of news from an online newspaper about a student who committed suicide (see an extract in Appendix I). This news directly related to the story of *The Teacher*. Then the students were assigned a short essay to write by applying this news as the resource and guideline for their writings. The instruction for the essay was as follows:

Write an essay about students' committing suicide by using the above resources as your guidelines. Explain whether you agree or disagree with such a deed and why so?

Although this short essay seemed like a complicated task assigned early in the semester, it was a worthwhile assignment for the students to practise writing critically and presenting their own ideas about the story studied in class. The provided essay topic was also related to the literature teaching approach i.e. reader-response theory which provided the students a chance to reflect their personal ideas and experience as both a teacher-trainee and a student in their writing.

However, perhaps because of the heavy teaching workloads, as she had to teach six English courses that semester, Ajarn Sodsai did not regularly correct and give feedback on students' writing assignments. In general, she was

always late in correcting and returning assignments to the students. Although Ajarn Sodsai did not correct and return students' assignments immediately, in class, she always gave overall comment and discussions on the questions assigned to the students. This is probably due to her heavy workload in that semester as she had to teach 21 hours per week. Thus, she might not have enough time to correct and give individual feedback and comments on students' assignments before starting each new story as she expected.

## Mid-term examination paper

The mid-term examination was in the form of a written passage. There were three questions related to four short stories: *The Teacher*; *Why, Honey?*; *Crickets*; and *A Family Supper*, that the students studied in the first half of the semester. The students had two hours to answer these three questions:

1. In *The Teacher* (by Catherine Lim), it presents an 'estranged relationship between a teacher and a student. Describe this with your own words whether their decision at the end is wrong. (15 points)
2. In *Why, Honey?* (by Raymond Carver), there are many points in the stories which present the family bond between mother and son. What makes things go wrong or right in a family? And how this affect to their society? (15 points)
3. In *Crickets* (by Robert Olen Butler) and *A Family Supper* (by Kazuo Ishiguro), the father – son relationship is clearly represented. What are the similarities and/or differences of the fathers and sons in both stories? (15 points)

The characteristics of the mid-term examination questions were the same as the ones provided for the students in their assignments. All three questions asked for students' application of analytical and critical knowledge from the stories by using the interrogatives 'why' and 'how'. In addition, in Question 3, the students were expected to make a comparison or contrast between the

two stories, going beyond simply listing a range of similarities and differences in their attitudes. This task would encourage the students to practise their criticality extensively.

## **Written assignments before the final examination**

Generally, the characteristics of questions given in the assignments before the final examinations were not different from those ones before the mid-term examinations. All questions were in the form of open-ended questions. It is clear that the assignment questions before the final examinations still needed not only factual answers but also analysis and criticism from the students. However, compared to the questions provided for the assignments before the mid-term examinations, these sets of questions were complicated both in terms of the questions themselves and the answers needed from the students. One main question consisted of many sub-questions which needed more profound knowledge from the students and evidence to support their answer. The questions required not only the factual knowledge from the student, by using the question words 'what' and 'who', but they also required an answer containing analytical and critical knowledge by using follow-up questions such as 'How do you envision the rest of the father's life?' as appears in Question 5. Thus, we can see that this required the students to think critically in finding reasons for their answers. However, there were some questions asked for factual answers without any follow-up questions such as 'Why?', 'Why not?' In some questions, the teacher did not ask the students to give a reason to support their answers as she had done in the earlier assignments questions before the mid-term exam. This is probably because she wanted to focus on the factual and descriptive answers significant to the story. The examples of these questions will be clearly discussed in Chapter 6, section *Naree's assignments before the final examination* (see p. 204) and Chapter 7, section *Kanda's assignments before the final examination* (see p. 253).

Examples of more complicated and analytical questions in the written assignments before the final examination may also be seen in the assignment on the story *The Boarding House*. In this assignment, the questions were also in the form of both factual and analytical ones as in the previous assignments since the beginning of the semester. However, what was noticeable in these assignment questions was the requirement for the application of students' personal experience and cultural background knowledge to answer some questions. An example may be seen as follows,

Question 1: From the story, how does the 'boarding house' of Mrs Mooney represent you the society and people in Dublin, Ireland? Give reasons to support your answers.

From the above question, we can see that the students needed not only to understand the story, but they also need to have the cultural background knowledge about Dublin, Ireland in order to answer this question.

Question 5: It can be said that Joyce's *The Boarding House* shows a 'peculiar' human relationship, especially between a mother and daughter, or a man and a woman. Describe one of these and give examples to support your answer.

In order to answer Question 5, the students needed to have personal background knowledge about human nature and human relationship. Thus, it is noticeable that Ajarn Sodsai would like her students to apply both literary background knowledge to the story they were dealing and but their profound personal background knowledge together with their understanding about human relationships.

Another example of a complicated question related to human nature can also be seen in one assignment question for the story, *Mabel*:

Question 5: Without seeing each other for many years after engagement, do you think it is possible for a man or a woman to be still faithful to his/her

fiancé? Why / Why not? What makes him/her change or not change the minds?

From all provided assignments, we can see that Ajarn Sodsai always tried to encourage the students to apply their personal ideas and opinions toward life in the answers to their assignment questions. This kind of question enables the students to practise their critical thinking when answering. Additionally, it is noticeable that the questions Ajarn Sodsai provided in the assignments are directly related to the reader-response theory. The key idea of reader-response as an approach is that the reader is central to construction of meaning, and that readers read ('respond') differently. This approach assisted the students to reflect their personal ideas, opinions and feelings towards the text they read as well as deriving insight into the characters' minds, helping them gain more understanding about the short stories. With the questions in assignment, students had a chance to integrate their experience with the stories.

## **Second interview with Ajarn Sodsai**

This second interview was conducted informally, without an audio recording; however, I made notes during this interview. I asked her about some specific topics not mentioned in the first interview. First, I asked Ajarn Sodsai about why she chose the 12 short stories for this course. Ajarn Sodsai told me that she intentionally chose all these 12 short stories to be presented in this order, that is, from the first story that is so close to their life, *The Teacher*, and then to other stories dealing with relationships in the family such as *A Family Supper* and *Why, Honey?*, and so on. Then, in the second half of the semester, she extended the stories to be more about human relationships outside the family such as *The Boarding House*, and so on. She told me that she chose these stories to be presented in this order with the intention of the developing the students' thinking process. She wanted the students to learn and understand the nature of themselves before progressing to understanding the relationships of people in the family and of people in the world outside.

She said that this would be good for not only the students' development of thinking process, but for their criticality.

The next topic I talked to Ajarn Sodsai about was the way she provided the definition of some difficult vocabulary in the stories to the students. I asked her why she did so instead of encouraging the students to look for the meaning from the dictionary by themselves. Ajarn Sodsai told me that she did not want the students to feel discouraged by the difficult words in the stories they had to read. Instead, she wanted the students to spend more time in reading, understanding, and analysing the stories rather than wasting time in finding all vocabulary and then becoming too tired or too bored to read each story assigned to them. I also asked Ajarn Sodsai about the written assignments and whether she focused much on the grammatical mistakes in students' written assignment or not. She told me that she did not focus much on students' grammatical mistakes as this course is a literary course, not language. She wanted the students to present their ideas and opinions without worrying about grammatical correctness. However, occasionally, she still corrected some minor grammatical mistakes in the students' assignments but did not deduct any marks at all.

In the last part of our second interview, I asked Ajarn Sodsai about the reasons why she always provided vivid examples and illustrations to the students in class. Ajarn Sodsai commented that, in her opinion, it is necessary to do so especially in the literature class as the students' personal and cultural experience is limited and different from what was presented in the stories. Presenting examples would help the students to perceive what happened in the stories clearer and it would enable them to understand and analyse the stories more easily as well. I also asked Ajarn Sodsai about another teaching method that she always used in her classroom; asking open-ended questions. Ajarn Sodsai told me that this is her favourite teaching method especially in the literature classroom. She believed that this method was challenging not only to herself but also to the students. It encouraged the students to think

more and to make an effort to find the answers for themselves that would help foster critical thinking in the students as well.

## Final examination paper

In the final examination paper, the questions were still in the same form and characteristics i.e. in the form of short essay. However, there were five questions instead of three as in the mid-term examinations. The students still had two hours to answer these five questions.

1. From Sun and Moon, what do you think of the parents and the way they talk to the children? What upsets Sun, and why? At the end, do you think the children are happy? What are the reasons for your opinion?
2. According to *The Boarding House* do you think Mrs Mooney does the 'right' thing to her daughter, Polly? Why so? In your view, is Polly satisfied with the way she has been raised?
3. In *Sredi Vashtar*, at what point do we know that Conratin's prayers have been answered? What evidence does Conratin accept? Do you think Saki is making any comment about superstition or religious belief, and if so, what is it?
4. According to *The Killers*, there is no actual violence in the story, despite the title. Comment on the use of dialogue, the contrast between the two groups of men OR the ending, which could lead to any evidence.
5. What have you got from studying this course, especially in terms of 'human nature'? Answer this by giving some examples from the stories you learned.

We can see that the questions in final examination are more detailed and complicated than those in mid-term examinations. All five questions asked for student's application of analytical and critical knowledge from the stories by

using the question 'why' and 'how'. This time, the teacher required more of students' opinion by asking them to make comments, compare and contrast, on some specific issues in the story.

It is noticeable that the last question in the final examination was the most critical and analytical question. This question was open in its nature as it did not focus specifically in any stories. In contrast, the students had an open opportunity to apply any stories they had studied in this course as the supporting evidence to their answer. The main focus of the question which was about the 'human nature' actually provided the students with a chance to apply what they had learned from the stories in this course together with their understanding about life and human nature in their answer. In my view, this question is the most integrated question in this course and it is very appropriate to provide it as the last question in the final examination as it enabled the students to practise their criticality particularly in the domain of critical reason and wide-ranging critical self-reflection.

## Conclusions

This chapter presented Ajarn Sodsai's perception and awareness of criticality. It also presented her teaching approaches in a literature class within the Thai context. It is clear that Ajarn Sodsai's individual teaching approaches were influential on students' development of criticality. Additionally, we also have seen the effect of teacher's personal characteristics on student's practice of criticality in class.

From the collected data, we can see that Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches in her literature classes are related to Barnett's (1997) and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2. Regarding its relationship to Barnett, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai always supported the students in practising their criticality in all three domains through her personal characteristics and teaching approaches such as questioning and classroom discussion. It is noticeable that her emphasis was put equally on the three

domains, that is, formal knowledge, the self and the world. However, the students' practices can be seen clearly on the first two levels of the first two domains in form of critical thinking and self-reflection. The practice of critical action which is in the third domain was presented in the students' application of their critical reason and critical self-reflection in their writing tasks, assignments and interviews. However, it is not easy to witness their actual actions in such a limited time and space as a classroom or interviews.

Moreover, Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches were clearly related to the five intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* Throughout the classroom observations, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai tried her best in encouraging certain intellectual resources: background knowledge, knowledge of critical thinking standards in a particular field, possession of critical concepts, knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind. Additionally, it is noticeable that, among the three components in teaching critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.*, Ajarn Sodsai was successful in providing 'an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students were encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion' (Bailin *et al.*, 1999, p.299). This teaching practice also helped develop another important characteristic that is self-confidence which can be considered another important resource for the students to accomplish critical thinking.

The relationship of Ajarn Sodsai's teaching practices to the three literature teaching models can also be seen clearly throughout the semester. However, according to the classroom observations, I can notice a slight degree of mismatch between the stated syllabus principles and Ajarn Sodsai's actual practice. As discussed earlier, the three course aims stated in her course syllabus focused on the three literature teaching theories which are the Stylistic approach, the Reader-response approach, and the Language-based approach. In her actual teaching practice throughout the semester, it is noticeable that Ajarn Sodsai's focus was on the cultural aspects of the literary

text together with the application of the Reader-response approach rather than the Stylistic and the Language-based approach.

The evidence can be seen in the way she usually emphasised the cultural connections in the stories and related them to students' own culture and encouraged the students to have discussion about these cultural topics (see pp. 138-140 and p. 154). Additionally, in almost every class, she always applied the Reader-response approach which encourages the active role of the readers and the transaction between the readers, and the text by engaging the students, their personal experience, the texts, and the cultural context together through the teaching and reading process. Clear evidence is presented in assignment questions for many stories such as *The Teacher* (see p. 156 and p.159), *The Boarding House* and *Mabel* (see p. 168). However, Ajarn Sodsai seldom focused on the stylistics approach or the use of language in the literary work or on the language used by the students in their written assignments. This is probably because her aim for literature teaching was not at making textual discoveries and interpretations by describing and analysing the language of a literary text.

We can see that Ajarn Sodsai's teaching practices were distinctive in Thai culture particularly in the ways she is always supportive, open-minded and flexible in classes. Her practices in asking students questions related to both their personal experience and the stories in every class provided them a chance to think critically for the answers. It also helped encourage them not to be passive within the limits of a large class size and a low language level. Although the influence of Thai culture and value such as *kreang jai*, *saving face* and *the respect for seniority* still prevailed in the students, it appeared that the students were encouraged well to practise their criticality in classes thorough Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics and teaching approaches.

In the next chapter, I will present the data analysis of the first case study student, Naree.

# Chapter 6

## Data Analysis of Case Study Student: Naree

### Introduction

This chapter will present a case study student, Naree (pseudonym) and will explore themes which emerged from the collected data. I will write the case study in a descriptive and chronological way according to the data sources collected from the case study student as provided in Chapter 4, section *Three stages of the data presentation* (see p. 129).

### Background to the case study student: Naree

Naree (pseudonym) was a 23-year-old fifth year Education student majoring in English. As an education student, in her fourth year of study Naree had to spend eight months in a junior high school on teaching practice and then come back to finish her degree. Naree got a scholarship from the Royal Thai government and after graduation she had to be a teacher for three years in service for the scholarship at a school in her hometown. Regarding her background in English literature, Naree took her first course in English literature in her second year of study and has taken five literature courses altogether. The present course that she enrolled in this semester i.e. *English Literature II* was her sixth literature course which is the last one before she graduated.

## Why I am writing about Naree

Naree was a friendly, active, outgoing, and self-confident person. She was interested in many fields and always enjoyed meeting new people. Naree was not outstanding academically. Her GPA was average and she did not seem to be a hard-working student who always prepared well before classes. Naree's English was not at a high level. Regarding the four basic skills in English i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing, Naree did quite well in the first two skills, especially in speaking. During the observation and also in the interviews, her speaking skill appeared stronger than her writing skill. She used a wide range of vocabulary. Naree could write long and complicated sentences in English, but with incorrect grammatical structures and a limited vocabulary. Generally, her sentences appeared unclear and redundant. They were sometimes quite difficult for Thai teachers such as Ajarn Sodsai and I to understand. This could be an obstacle not only for her study as an English major student in the Faculty of Education, but also for her career as a teacher in the near future.

However, Naree was outstanding in terms of her performance and participation in class. She was always eager to participate in class by asking and answering the teacher's questions. This is different from the typical practice of Thai students who are usually silent and submissive in class. The reason that Naree had become a self-confident and outstanding student in this way is probably because of her age which was approximately two years older than other students in the class. Another reason is probably due to her family background and her personal characteristics. Naree was an eldest daughter who had had to look after her younger sister since she was young. This is the reason that she appeared mature, responsible and full of self-confidence. All of her personal background and her characteristics including her outstanding practice in class are the reasons I chose her as one of my case study students.

## Classroom observations

### Participation in class

Generally, Naree was an active student in classes throughout the semester. She always participated in classes by answering the teacher's questions or discussing the topics raised by the teacher. Her enthusiasm was shown by the way she always sat in the second row of the class and looked at the teacher almost all the time. She always took notes while listening to the teacher. When the teacher asked questions and the class became silent, Naree was usually the first one who answered those questions. Naree was also the first one who raised her hand and asked the teacher some questions in class. However, it was not very often that she did so. She did not ask questions in every class but approximately once every two or three sessions. In general, the questions that she asked were factual questions when she got confused about what was going on in the story such as 'When did Mrs De Ropp know that Conradin have that polecat-ferret?' and, sometimes, interpretive questions such as 'Why did the son scold his mother? I don't understand his feeling at that time'. Sometimes, Naree asked the teacher to share or explain a new idea or experience that she had not had to the class. For example, in the eleventh observation, she asked Ajarn Sodsai that 'This story writes much about autumn. Could you please tell me what autumn is like? I have never seen it before.' However, actually, 90 per cent of her classroom participation was more often conducted in form of answering the teacher's questions rather than asking questions or participating discussion in class. It is hard for Naree to participate in class, probably because the class is too large.

Her active participation in class was shown and developed well throughout the semester. For example, in the tenth class, *Sredni Vashtar*, Naree had an interesting discussion with the teacher about her opinion on about the word 'imagination'. The story concerns a 10-year-old boy called Conradin, who lives with his strict cousin and guardian, Mrs De Ropp. Conradin rebels against her

and finds escape in his vivid imagination. He invents a new religion for himself, which centres around idolising a polecat-ferret he calls Sredni Vashtar; a vengeful, merciless god. Conradin keeps the polecat hidden in a cage in the garden shed, and worships the idol in secret. The story comes to a climax when his cousin sets out to discover his god.

At the end of the class when the teacher asked for any comments or opinions related to this story, for the first time in this course, Naree had an interesting discussion with the teacher:

Naree I think this story is very impressive.  
Ajarn Sodsai Why do you think so?  
Naree It made me realise the power of imagination.  
Ajarn Sodsai How?  
Naree Could I speak in Thai? I just want to share my opinion.  
Ajarn Sodsai Yes, of course!  
Naree [in Thai] *Coradin is just a poor and helpless boy who has to be under control of his cruel aunt at all time. However, he could use his vivid and powerful imagination to escape from that unpleasant condition. He wholeheartedly believed in the god that he invented by himself. So, it made me realise that imagination is the source of power. We just have to believe in what we think and then everything is possible.*

According to Naree's discussion with the teacher, I could see that she felt more relaxed when making a discussion in Thai than in English. She looked more confident in her use of Thai and could participate in the discussion fluently which was not like when she answered the questions in English that she had to stop to think for a while before uttering the answers. In Thai, Naree could express her opinion about the significance of imagination toward life in a more critical way because she did not have difficulty with the use of language.

## Uses of language in the classroom

Although her English was not very good, Naree tried her best to use it in class especially when answering the teacher's questions. In my first interview with Naree, I asked her about the reason she used English in answering the questions instead of asking them. Naree said that,

I'm not so confident in my English so I always feel embarrassed to ask any questions in English. I know that the teacher will not blame me for my poor English, but I still feel somehow awkward in doing so. Although I feel more comfortable asking questions in Thai, sometimes I try to ask the questions in English too. For me, the grammatical structure in interrogative sentences is more difficult and complicated than the affirmative sentences. I always get confused when using question words and helping verbs in interrogative sentences.

(Naree Interview 1)

In classes, I noticed that Naree sometimes used Thai to answer the questions which are quite difficult or to share her ideas with the teacher about the complicated topics. For example, in the fourth classroom observation, Ajarn Sodsai asked a question about the writing technique used in the story *Why, Honey?* She would like to encourage the students to notice the writing style in this story which is unique and different from most stories. Thus, she asked the students a question about that writing style and Naree is the first one who raised her hand to answer that question.

Ajarn Sodsai What do you think about the writing style of this story?

Naree I think it is somehow different from the first one that we read and I think it is also different from other stories that I ever read too.

Ajarn Sodsai How is it different? Could you please explain more?

Naree Umm...The narration of the story is different from general stories.

Ajarn Sodsai How?

Naree I think the writer tried to use short words and simple sentences which make me feel that this style of writing is different from other stories.

Ajarn Sodsai Just that? Anything else?

Naree Umm...It is difficult to explain what I think in English. Can I use Thai?

Ajarn Sodsai C'mon. You can do it in English. But, okay, let's try Thai for this time.

Naree *[in Thai] I think, in this story, the style of writing is more Natural than other stories that I read. I mean it makes me feel I am watching a movie or play rather than reading a short story.*

Ajarn Sodsai *[in Thai] So, how do you feel with that?*

Naree *[in Thai] I think it gives me more vivid picture of what going on in the story. I can feel what the writer wants to convey in his writing. Moreover, the style of writing that always uses 'I' with the main character together with the use of short and simple sentences really increases the intensity of the story, especially in the last part of the story*

(Observation 4 - *Why, Honey?*)

According to the transcription above, it is clear that Naree had difficulty in using English to express her ideas. Using Thai for complicated or difficult topics makes her feel more confident about discussion in class. Apart from that, the ideas that Naree presented in Thai were more complicated and critical than the ideas presented in English. We can see that in the later part of her conversation with Ajarn Sodsai, Naree used more complicated words (when translated into English) such as 'vivid', 'convey' and 'intensity' to have a discussion about the style of writing. This discussion was done more fluently and critically probably because she did not have any limitations in the use of language as she did when she presented her ideas in English.

Naree not only used Thai to answer and discuss difficult and complicated topics, but she also used Thai in her discussion with friends in class on every topic. Naree stated the reason for using Thai in discussion with friends is that:

We are all Thais and this is not an English conversation class, so I prefer Thai to English in the discussion with my friends. It is easier to use Thai to discuss complicated and difficult issues which need critical thinking in a class like English literature. Trying to figure out the answer or to generate the idea is difficult enough for me, so we don't want to make it becomes more difficult by using English for our discussion.

(Naree's first interview)

What Naree talked suggested a double cognitive load as she had to generate her ideas before expressing them either in Thai or English.

### **Peer assistance**

Although Naree is an outstanding student in the class in the way she is active and always participated class discussion, in some ways, she possessed the typical Thai characteristics of 'collectivism' as defined by Hofstede (1997) as did other students. According to Hofstede, collectivism is the cultural dimension that characterised by a tight social framework in which people expect others in groups of which they are a part to look after them and protect them when they are in trouble.

We can see this in the way the students always preferred to have discussion in pairs or in groups instead of answering the teacher individually. Generally, Naree was a self-confident person. However, when the teacher asked a difficult question or raised any complicated topic for discussion, Naree sometimes talked with her friends first instead of answering that question at once. For example,

Ajarn Sodsai Student D, could you please read the paragraph starts with 'Then my father..' to your friends?

Student D [Reads] 'Then my father stood up, saying: 'I must attend the supper. Please excuse me for being burdened down by such matters. Kikuko will look after you.

Ajarn Sodsai [To student D] Thank you. [To class] What do you think about

what the father said?

Students [Silent]

Ajarn Sodsai Anyone want to share your idea? Is this a common talk between father and son?

Naree & Friends [Talk among themselves in Thai – *\*They sat at the front of the class while I was at the back. So, I could not hear exactly what they were discussing\**]

Naree I think it is not a common talk between father and son.

Ajarn Sodsai Why not?

Naree It sounds too polite and too ceremony.

Ajarn Sodsai Hmm, too ceremony? Do you mean too ceremonious and ritual?

Naree Yes, it sounds too formal. It shows that the father don't have a close relationship to his son and daughter. We can see this from the next sentence that says, 'My sister relaxed quite visibly once he had left the room'.

(Classroom observation thirteenth – *A Family Supper*)

## The first interview

In this section, I will discuss four main themes emerging from my first interview with Naree i.e. 1) student' perception of the importance of criticality and an awareness of her own capability in criticality development, 2) general attitude and impression of studying literature, 3) student's participation in class and their attitude to teaching practices. The detailed information of this interview was previously discussed in Chapter 4, section *Students' interviews* (see p. 114).

### **Students' perception of the importance of criticality and her awareness of her own capability in criticality development**

#### **Understanding of criticality**

One of the questions I asked Naree is how conscious she was of being a critical thinker in the literature classroom, and about her strengths and weakness as a critical thinker. During the first interview, I asked Naree about her understanding of critical thinking. For Naree,

Critical thinking means understanding, analysing and giving reasons for something that already happened. It is a kind of thinking used to analyse the result in order to find out the factors or reasons which cause that result to occur as there might be various causes that lead to the same result or outcome.

(Naree Interview 1)

In addition, Naree asserted about the significance of critical thinking that

It (critical thinking) helped me to think systematically about the cause and result of anything step by step and it helped me a great deal in solving problems or difficulties in my life. It also helps justifying any actions that decided to do in life.

(Naree Interview 1)

I asked Naree for more elaboration of what she said and Naree told me that that:

This semester I have to choose one elective subject provided in Faculty of Humanities. Those two subjects are this course, *English Literature II*, and *Creative Writing II*. At first, it was difficult for me to make a decision as I am interested in both courses. However, I have to choose only one. Thus, I started to think about the advantage and disadvantage of each course. I also think about the practicality of each one when applied to my work and study in the near future. Then, I decided to choose *English Literature II*. After graduation, I have to teach students in primary school and I think the knowledge I got from this course can be applicable to those students. Young students always like listening to stories, so, perhaps I can tell them the stories I learn in this course to call for their attention. It is more applicable to my work as a teacher in primary school. I did not choose another course because (*Creative Writing II*) I think those students are too young to do the

creative writing which is too difficult for them. So, I may not have a chance to apply what I learned from this course with those students.

(Naree's Interview 1)

What Naree said above can illustrate that she could practice her criticality well in her life and also in her study. Her practice of criticality could be seen in its application to Barnett's (1997) level two i.e. reflexivity in the domain of knowledge and domain of self. In terms of the domain of knowledge, evidence can be seen in the way she had a critical reason and reflected on her understanding in choosing the subject that she considered important for her study and her career in the future. Moreover, in terms of the self domain, she could also make a self-reflection on the subject that she chose to study. Furthermore, we can also see that Naree's criticality was also applied to level two (reflexive practice) in the third domain of Barnett i.e. in the form of critical action. We can see this application in the way Naree could reflect on practice and take action accordingly in deciding to study *English Literature II* instead of *Creative Writing II* in the way she said,

Thus, I started to think about the advantages and disadvantages of each course. I also think about the practicality of each one when applied to my work and study in the near future. Then, I decided to choose *English Literature II*. After graduation, I have to teach students in primary school and I think the knowledge I got from this course can be applicable to those students.

(Naree's Interview 1)

Naree said she could use critical thinking as a tool to understand life and the nature of any problems happening in her life; she could think critically to find out the cause of that problem and then reflect on it in the form of seeking a suitable solution to solve it.

When I was young, my mother taught me that no one is perfect. I just listened to her and accepted it. Then, when I studied in university level, teachers also taught me in the same idea that no one is perfect. Then, when I studied literature courses, many stories in the courses also confirmed me

in this point. Thus, I started to understand this truth and think more critically about it. It helps me to get more understanding with friends and people around me. When I faced any problems caused by them, I started to understand that any problems can occur no matter how hard we try to avoid them.

A few months ago, I had a conflict with my sister. She had an argument with my mother who was not pleased with her impolite practices. My sister then talked back to my mother very impolitely and ended the conversation by shutting the door loudly on my mother. After that, I talked to my sister and asked her apologise to our mother. But, my sister refused to do so, and talked back to me very impolitely as well. At that time, I almost lost my temper with her and hit her like she is still a little naughty sister. By the way, I happened to think that there will be nothing better in doing so. My sister is just a teenager who is not mature enough. She does not have a good consideration in life. So, I chose to wait until she had calmed down and then talked to her later. Thus, I found out that what I should do when any problem happen to me is to be calm and think critically about the nature of the problem and find the best solution to it.

(Naree Interview 1)

In my view, Naree's argument with her sister presented her early stage of becoming 'critical being'. At 23 years of age, Naree was recently also a teenager. However, she was mature enough to understand the teenager nature in her sister and then made a reasonable decision on the matter. This illustrated her practice in not only critical reason, but also critical self-reflection and critical action as proposed in Barnett's (1997) framework.

### **Importance of critical thinking in the literature classroom**

When asked about her perception of the importance of critical thinking in the literature classroom, Naree answered that critical thinking is very important for her not only in the literature classroom, but also in other subjects and everywhere outside the classroom.

Critical thinking is important. I have to use critical thinking in every step of my life - from the morning when I get up, throughout the day in the classroom and rest of the day outside the classroom. I think that the more I grow up, the more have to think more critically. In order to have a successful life, it is necessary to use reason in every step of life. You know, I did not consider critical thinking as important when I was young and studied in elementary and high school levels as the study focused on rote learning. However, when I became an undergraduate, critical thinking became very important for me and it is required in almost all the subjects I took. I am happy when trying to practise critical thinking in my study as it enabled me to think deeply and critically about the lessons especially in the subjects like literature.

(Naree Interview 1)

Studying while using critical thinking enabled her to get more understanding of what she was learning better than just memorising and reciting as she had done in the past.

When I studied in elementary and high school, I had to use memory a lot to remember and recite the lessons. Preparing for the exams is just doing memorising and reciting – just that. However, when I entered the university level, I had to do much more than that. Memorising and reciting is also important, but is not very necessary like in the past. I have to practise thinking critically in class and in answering the questions in quizzes and exams. The practice of thinking critically about the lessons makes me feel happier about studying. Now, I study with more understanding than when I was young and I think it is really good to study in this way. When I read any short stories in this course and also other stories outside class, the question 'Why?' that Ajarn Sodsai keeps asking us in classes always pops up in my mind. I start to think more about the cause and effect of what happens in the stories. I start to think whether it is reasonable or practical in being so and it is really fun to think like that. The stories become more lively for me.

(Naree Interview 1)

In the literature classroom, the practice of critical thinking is even more important to Naree than in other courses. She perceived that its use is required more in literary studies in general than in her other subjects due to

the nature and characteristics of the literary work itself. She had to think more critically and with greater application of reason when reading literature in order to analyse the message or ideas that the authors wanted to convey in their writing. For Naree, reading and studying literature were like studying life in miniature. She could learn the various patterns of life from the characters in the story and use them as models for her own life. Literature taught Naree more about life and helped her to gain more understanding of its nature.

The more I read literature, the better I can understand life. Life is always uncertain. Its flow is always up and down which is really unpredictable. Literature helps me to understand this fact of life. It is not only the nature of life which is always like this, but it is also the nature of everything around us which is full of uncertainty. I read literature, think about it, find reason for it and then understand what is happening to the character in the story. Sometimes when I face any problems in life, I compare mine to that of the character in the story. This way helps me to solve the problem.

(Naree Interview 1)

I asked her to give further examples of such a situation and Naree said that,

Last year I had a problem in my personal life. My boyfriend did not seem sincere to me. I felt so bad about this. However I happened to think about a myth I learned from the course *Legend and Folklore*. It is the story of Cupid and Psyche. I love one sentence in the story when Cupid said to Psyche that '*Love cannot live where there is no trust*'. This saying reminded me of my situation. Then, I decided to trust my boyfriend instead of keep being curious and nosy about what he did and said. I decided that I would not be like Psyche who lost her love due to her own silliness and curiosity.

(Naree Interview 1)

It is clear that Naree perceived criticality as an important factor in her study especially in the literature classroom. Moreover, she could take the contribution of the practice of criticality in the literature classroom to her life outside classroom. She not only knew how to think critically, but also to reflect it in a form of action. Again, it seems that Naree could use critical thinking as

a tool to understand life and the nature of any problems happening in her life and think critically to find a suitable solution for them.

### **The development of critical thinking in literature classroom**

I further asked Naree about the development of her critical thinking during the study of English literature and she stated that it has been developed well through attending literature classes. She could learn to think more systematically about the issues and had a broader point of view towards every aspect of life. Apart from the nature of literature subjects that enable the learners to practise their critical thinking in it with wider perspective, the teacher of that course was also an important factor that facilitated the development of her critical thinking through her teaching approach. From the literature classroom, Naree learned how to think analytically and knew how to apply this kind of thinking practically in her life. Above all, she could perceive the importance of criticality through her own practice and her own experience. Through the study of literature, she could comprehend the importance of being critical in her life outside the academic world. The following extract is an example Naree gave for how criticality is important and helpful for solving problems in her life

Last week I had an argument with my mother and felt that she did not understand me. I compared my problem to that of the character in the story *Why, Honey?* which I studied in this course. In that story the main character who had a problem with his mother used an aggressive way to solve the problem which caused great suffering to his mother. This made me understand the feeling of a mother who is in conflict with her children. Thus, I calmed down and understand more about my mother's feelings. My anger calmed down and then I tried to find out a solution for the problem in another way which is not aggressive.

(Naree Interview 1)

This practice of Naree is related to Barnett's domain of knowledge, self and the world. Regarding Naree's practice in application to domain of knowledge,

this can be seen in the way she possessed critical reason and reflection in her understanding. She could understand her mother's feeling after reading the short story and then apply her understanding to the situation she was facing. For the domain of self and the world, it is clear that Naree could perform critical self-reflection and critical reaction in the way she could calm her anger down and tried to perform a critical action by finding a suitable solution for the conflict with her mother in a non-aggressive way.

### **Students' participation in class and their attitude to teaching methodologies**

Naree said that she liked the teaching methods of Ajarn Sodsai, the teacher in her literature class, *English Literature II* as the class enabled her to think deeply and widely with the question 'Why?' asked by the teacher. She could practise her criticality by attempting to answer those questions.

When asked about the teaching approaches that the teacher, Ajarn Sodsai used in her class, Naree said that:

She told us to finish reading each story before class. In class, she led a discussion about the book by asking many 'Why' and 'How' questions. She always asked the students, 'Why do you think this way?' which encouraged me to think all the time in order to find the answers for those questions. I like this teaching method. It is not boring; in fact it is very interesting. Ajarn Sodsai does not tell us openly about what happens in the story and does not directly lead us to the correct answer. She always guides us to the point by asking the questions. In order to answer her questions, I had to figure out the evidence from the story to support them. It was fun when trying to find those answers and evidences.

(Naree Interview 1)

What she said was well supported by what happened in class through the classroom observation which enabled me to see Naree's practice of criticality in response to the teacher's teaching method.

In the observation of *English Literature II* class number two where the story *A Teacher* was discussed, the teacher started the class by relating students' personal experience to the story they were going to study. Naree told me that this method generated her interest in the story. It made her understand more about the feelings of the student character in the story. The teacher asked the students to undertake a pre-lesson exercise which was about student's personal experiences with their teachers, conducted in a friendly tone which encouraged the students to feel relaxed and eager to participate. The example of dialogue was previously mentioned in Chapter 5, section *Teaching approaches* (see p. 136).

Despite Ajarn Sodsai's friendly encouragement, the class initially remained silent. Naree was the first to raise her hand to answer. This illustrated her good participation as she was always willing to answer the teacher's question. She told me that:

I am not afraid to answer the questions of this teacher as she is always friendly and open-minded. She listens to all students' answers and opinions no matter whether it is right or wrong. Her questions don't scare me that much.

(Naree Interview 1)

From this point we can see that apart from the teaching approaches used by Ajarn Sodsai, her personality and characteristics also influenced the development of Naree's criticality in the classroom.

### **Cultural aspects**

One of the questions I asked Naree in the second part of the interview was about the influence of Thai cultural characteristics on the development of criticality in Thai students. Naree said that:

In my opinion, Thai culture has a lot of influence in discouraging students from participating in class. We feel that we are much younger and it is not polite to disagree with or ask questions of the teachers. I can see this clearly in my experience when I was a student in a school and later when I was a trainee teacher in a secondary school. When I was young, I almost dared not to answer or ask the teacher any questions for fear that he would blame or yell at me for not reading before class or for incorrectly answering the questions. I think this is one of the reasons why Thai students still keep silent in class even when they enter the university level. We were taught like this for a long time since we were young, so it is not easy to change our behaviour to be more participative or intuitive in class.

(Naree Interview 1)

According to Naree, we can see that the traditional Thai culture and values still have influence on students' practice of criticality in the classroom.

## **Language resources**

Despite the teacher's attempt to provide an open, liberated environment in her class, it appears that most of the students kept silent and studied passively by just listening and jotting down what the teacher gave to them in the lecture. Generally, the students answered the questions together to avoid the wrong answer. However, there were just a few of them who answered the question individually but in a tone without confidence. Naree was sometimes one of those students. Although she was a confident student compared with other students in the class, she sometimes appeared hesitant and awkward when answering the questions in English. In the interview with her, she explained this situation as follows:

Generally, I always try to participate in class by answering the questions that the teacher asks especially when the class is silent and no one tries to answer the question. In my opinion, all of my friends could answer the questions, but they do not want to. They know the answer but they don't want to speak out loud. I have even asked them about this and they told me that

they could figure out the answer in their head, but they did not know how to express it in English. I think the main problem is language. Though we are majoring in English, we are still not sure about it. It is difficult to find the right word that we want to use to explain ideas. I think that everyone can think about the answer, but just gets struck by the problem of language.

(Naree Interview 1)

### **The knowledge building process: peer assistance**

When I asked Naree about the method she used to interpret text which required cultural knowledge to understand it, she told me that she preferred to read the story again and again by herself firstly in order to get more overall understanding of that story. Then, occasionally, she would discuss unclear points with a group of friends. If she still did not understand any points, she would try to find supplementary reading from the library. Naree told me that:

I found out that this method helps me to gain more understanding about the story we were studying. In general, I'm quite a self-confident person and prefer to think by myself, however, sometimes I found out that discussing with friends over a complicated subject like literary interpretation is much better than figuring it out alone. If I had enough time to read the story before class, I sometimes did it with friends so that we can talk and discussion with each other. This method helps us to understand the text better. Then after class, when there were any points that we didn't understand, we would read and discuss them together again.

(Naree Interview 1)

What Naree said in this interview was illustrated by what she practised in class during my classroom observation (see Section *Peer assistance*, p. 181). This practice of peer assistance in Naree and also in other students contributes to the process of knowledge building is due to the dominant characteristic of Thai i.e. cooperativeness. We can see this clearly in the way Naree said in her interview that 'sometimes I found out that discussing with friends [over] a complicated subject like literary interpretation is much better than figuring it out alone.' Thus, it appears that for students whose English is

not their first language, studying and discussing lessons in English literature together in pairs or in groups can be more beneficial to the process of building their knowledge and critical thinking.

## **Written assignment before the mid-term examinations**

### **Naree's first assignment: *The Teacher***

In her first and second written assignments for the story entitled *The Teacher*, Naree had a chance to apply her direct personal background knowledge in them. *The Teacher* is a short story about a student who has some personal problems with her family and tries to let her teacher know through an essay. However, her teacher never paid attention to the content of her writing, Instead, her focus is only on the poor grammar presented by that little girl, not on the problem that girl tried to convey through her essay in the topic *Family*. At the end of the story, the girl commits suicide without any understanding from her teacher.

According to the first interview, Naree said that she felt confident in answering the questions and writing a short essay concerning this question as she herself is both a student and a 'teacher-to- be'. As a student, she understood the feeling of a student who needed help and understanding from the teacher not only academically but, sometimes also personally, as did the main character in this short story. However, she also understood the situation and feeling of a teacher as she further stated that

Having a chance to be a trainee teacher in a high school last year, I totally understand the feeling of teachers in a junior high school who are responsible for too many students. It is very difficult for the teachers to pay close attention to every student.

(Naree Interview 1)

After reading the story *The Teacher* with some discussion with the teacher and her classmates, Naree realises more about the role of the teacher that she is going to begin in the near future. It gave her a clear picture and a vivid example of what a good teacher should be. This is the reason she felt so confident in answering the first assignment and mid-term examination question. The discussion and analysis of Naree's assignments and examination paper will be provided in the later sections.

Naree had been taking English literature courses since her second year of study. Those courses were *Historical and Literary Background to English literature*, *Introduction to Fiction and Non-fiction*, *English Poetry I*, *Legend and Folklore* and *World Literature* (all pseudonyms). The literature course she was taking at the time of interview was *English Literature II* which was her last literature course. Naree told me that those courses provided her with a great deal of background knowledge in literary courses which is necessary for her in literary study.

Most of literary courses I took during the past three years were necessary for me as they provided me with the background knowledge in literary works step by step. For example, the first literary course, *Historical and Literary Background to English Literature*, which I took in my second year taught me the factual knowledge about literature such as literary terms, figurative language and so on. It helped me to understand what is theme, plot, setting etc which is very useful for the following literary courses that I had to study. One of the chapters of this course, *Historical Background in English Literature* is also very useful as it helped me to understand more about the cultural differences between Western and Thai culture. Another course I considered important is *Legend and Folklore*. It enabled me to widen my English vocabulary and also helped me to understand more about word roots that derived from mythological names. The knowledge about mythological allusions helped me to interpret some poetry more easily.

(Naree Interview 1)

However, despite taking six literary courses in total, Naree still did not feel confident in her academic knowledge in terms of literary study. She realised

that she did not have sufficient knowledge of English literature and sometimes had problems in understanding or interpreting the stories while reading or doing the assignments and examinations. As she said:

Although I know the meaning of themes and figurative language such as metaphor, simile, personification and so on, sometimes it is very difficult for me to interpret it from stories or the poems. So, it is not easy for me to understand or interpret the stories that I read.

(Naree Interview 1)

Naree's problems are not exactly her insufficient of knowledge of English literature but the application of this knowledge to the literary works that she reads. However, Naree achieved a high score in her first assignment (17 out of 20) and first short essay for the short story (7 out of 10), *The Teacher*. Following are examples of Naree answers to questions asked:

Question 1: What is the teacher's attitude when he heard that Tan Geok Peng had committed suicide? Why do you think so?

Answer for Question 1:

He was very upset because he had never knew before about Tan Geok Peng's problems and he was her teachers. So, from her suicidal, everyone in his school especially his principle would ask him and he couldn't answer his questions absolutely.

(Naree Assignment 1 - *The Teacher*)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From her answer, we can see that Naree did not directly answer the question which asks about the 'teacher's attitude'. What Naree gave in her answer is the teacher's *feeling* about the situation rather than *attitude*. She did not, for example, explain what the teacher thinks about the death of his student by giving detailed illustrations from the story. Moreover, she did not clearly answer the follow-up question i.e. Why do you think so? which was probably due to the limitation of time or her lack of awareness of the significance of that

question. However, for the later question, Naree provided a more elaborate answer by responding to the follow-up question 'Why?' given by the teacher.

Question 3: From the story, who do you think is responsible to Tan Geok Peng's death? Why?

Answer for Question 3:

Everyone should responsible to Tan Geok Peng's death especially herself. Because this was her life, she should not let problems to be more powerful than her, however everyone around her, her family, her teachers and her friends should be responsible too. Because human is social animal. I mean that not only *ourselves* that can be alive alone but also depending on the other too.

(Naree Assignment 1 - *The Teacher*)

Naree attained full marks for this question with the comment 'good' from the teacher. This is because she answered the question well, with enough reasons and evidence to support her answer. This can be seen in the way she stated in her answer that 'because human is social animal' and then provided the elaboration for this reason i.e. 'I mean that not only *ourselves* that can be alive alone but also depending on the other too' which made it become clearer and more supportive of her answer.

### **Naree's short essay**

There was only one short essay assigned for this course. The teacher provided an extract of news from an online newspaper which is about a student who committed suicide. This news directly related to the story *The Teacher*. Then the students were assigned to write a short essay by applying the resources i.e. an extract of news as the guideline. The instruction for the essay is as followed:

Write an essay about students' committing suicide by using the above resources as your guidelines. Explain whether you agree or disagree with such a deed and why so.

From her short essay, it seems that Naree did not clearly use the words like 'agree' or 'disagree' to state her point of view regarding the suicide of that student. However, she presented some development of her ideas in this short essay. The development is noticeable in the way she gave clear examples and applied both her personal background knowledge and literary background knowledge to support her opinion in the essay.

I remember a piece of bad news that the scholar student from Thailand jumped down from the university's building in Germany. It was really sad that the cause of suicidal was he got homesick. I knew this tragedy from morning news last two years. After the news' end, I thought that 'what happen with him?' How wonder that a Thai man in small country can study abroad! He could get the chance that millions Thais couldn't do. If I could talk with him, I will tell him that 'Life is life. Life is happiness and sadness. If you are still alive, you should face both good and bad events with smiling. Surely you may cry and cry is good friend of us. It will come when you have no one and when you feel full with happiness.' And me too, I will be happy when the good day comes to me and I will be happy to cry when the bad day comes too. Because I feel that I'm still alive. I will refer to The Pandora's Box in my Legend and Folklore course in talking to him to show that suffer comes to this world and it is very simply things everyone have to get but don't forget that we still get hope. It is the powerful weapon that we got and you already have now. Night is too long but morning will come absolutely.

(Naree assignment 2 - The Teacher)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From her writing, we can see the application of reader-response theory which emphasises the interaction of the reader with the text to the story she learned in class. This can be seen in the way she could apply the myth of Pandora's box to the real life situation. Naree could make connections between her own

personal experience and those expressed in the literary text she learned in class. It is clear that she could apply the knowledge she had from the previous literature course i.e. *Legend and Folklore*, to her real life situations.

In the second interview with Naree I asked her about this essay. She told me that she was satisfied with her score of 7 out of 10. She wrote it from her personal experience as a student who won a scholarship from the government and also as a trainee teacher. What Naree wrote in the essay is what she would actually like to say to any students who encounter this kind of problem.

When I read the news provided as resource for this essay, I felt really upset for that student. I totally understand his feeling especially the feeling of getting homesick which I got when I had to study away from home. If I was his friend, I would talk to him in the same way I wrote in the essay. As a teacher-to-be, this news and this story encourages me to be more aware of my responsibility as a teacher. I promise to myself that I won't let any students in my class to face this kind of problem.

(Naree Interview 2)

I further asked her about why she mentioned *Pandora's box* in her essay and Naree said that,

I love this story. It helps me to understand the way of the world in an imaginative way. I count this story as the explanation for the causes of difficulties and problems in life. Whenever, I had problems, I told myself that, the world is not that bad. Actually there would be hope left for me in the box. There would be a way out for all kinds of problems.

(Naree Interview 2)

In general, Naree felt satisfied with the mark she got for the assignment and essay in this story, *The Teacher*. However, she told me that it would be better for her if the teacher had corrected grammatical errors and given some feedback and comments on her writing. From Naree's point of view, this course would be more effective if the students had feedback on their

assignments individually and immediately before starting each new short story.

## Mid-term examination paper

The mid-term examination was provided in the form of a written passage. There were three questions related to four short stories i.e. *The Teacher*, *Why, Honey?*, *Cricket* and *A Family Supper* that the students studied in the first half of the semester. The students had two hours to answer three questions (see Appendix K-*Midterm examinations questions*):

It is noticeable that not only the written assignments before the mid-term exam, but also the mid-term examination itself required the application of background knowledge from the students. According to Bailin *et al.* (1999), background knowledge is 'the depth of knowledge understanding and experience persons have in a particular area of study or practice' (p. 290). This knowledge is significant in determining the degree to which the people are capable of thinking critically in that particular area. In answering the mid-term examination Naree had to apply both *personal background knowledge* and *academic background knowledge* in her writing.

Naree said that two hours was not enough time for her to answer the questions in the mid-term examination. The evidence can be seen in her short essays given for each question. Naree wrote around 150 words on average for the answers of each question which is considered a short essay in such a long time provided for her and also in comparison to other students' writings in general. In my second interview with her, Naree talked to me about the length of her essay that:

I prepared well for the mid-term exam. The questions are not too difficult to answer and they are quite the same as what I did in the assignments.

However, I felt so nervous and excited that I could not think about exacts words and sentences to write down. When doing the assignments, I did it at

home with more time than this. I could open the book to see the story, but I could not do so in the exam. In fact, I knew what to write. I had it in my head, but I did not know how to write it out with the meaningful and appropriate words. That's the main problem for me.

(Naree Interview 2)

From Naree's interview, we can see that she had difficulty with the timed examination as she said that 'I felt so nervous and excited that I could not think about exact words and sentences to write down. When doing the assignments, I did it at home with more time than this.' This feeling of anxiety and worry had an effect on her ability to be critical. This nervousness due to the limitation of time and the limited range of English vocabulary and grammatical structure also led to Naree's inability to think critically.

Here is Naree's answer for the first question in the mid-term exam:

The tragedy comes from different expecting of both teacher and Tan Goeak Peng. For Tan Goeak Peng, whether she knows well her grammar is very bad and it is the cause of teacher's anger but she also tells about her tragic life to the teacher for expecting of having someone to understand her. But after first two essays, she doesn't got any soothing from him, but the eyes of detested, disappointed and blamed. There are the one of reason (may be the fade small point in her mind) that leads her to commit suicide. But all of these teacher's reaction stands on a good expect to his student to be better in grammar then she could get good while he slips to notice that the problem which should be solved is not grammar but her obstacle.

(Naree Mid-term Examination Paper)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From her answer, it is noticeable that, there are many grammatical errors and also other errors in English such as word choice, sentence structure, run-on sentences and so on which causes difficulty in understanding the message she would like to convey in her answer. However, she still tried to give examples from the story to support her ideas.

## Background knowledge in English language

As a student majoring in English in a Faculty of Education, English is one of the most important disciplines for Naree. However, as mentioned earlier, one of the main problems for Thai students that impedes the development of their criticality in English literature classroom is language. This problem is clearly evidenced by my interview with Naree about her short passage writing for the mid-term examination paper. She said:

I'm so embarrassed in my poor grammar. You know, I know what I want to write. I know how to answer the question. I know how to analyse the points that the teacher asked in the question but I don't know how to write it well. I'm not confident to write it out in a good grammar. I always feel panic when doing the written exam like this one. In limited time, it seems that my brain collapses. I cannot think about the suitable vocabulary to use in each sentence. Yes, apart from grammar, another problem of mine is vocabulary. It would be much better if I can write the answer in Thai.

(Naree Interview 1)

What she said is confirmed well in her writing which presents some sentences with wrong grammatical structure and the wrong choice of words. Followings are excerpts from Naree's answer in the mid-term examination paper:

Example 1,

Question 2: In *Why, Honey?* (by Raymond Carver), there are many points in the stories which present the family bond between mother and son. What makes things go wrong or right in a family? And how this affect to their society? (15 points)

Answer for Question 2:

Because there is not a father in the family, only mother has to grow her son herself. She tries fulfil his son, so she pays very attention to his son in double which leads to the annoying for her son. While the son is growing and want to be a man, the mother is paying more attention at his estrangement like he is a

boy. However, all the time of having conflict between them, there is the most powerful thing that bond them. It is the invisible thread of pure love of mother that the son can touch but at the time of angry age make him bursted and everything goes wrong. This point we can clearly see at the end of the story that the son try to find his mother and use the letters to chare his mother's thought (which he used to not understand it before). This is because of love.

(Naree Mid-term Examination Paper)

Example 2,

Question3: In *Crickets* (by Robert Olen Butler) and *A Family Supper* (by Kazuo Ishiguro), the father-son relationship is clearly represented. What are the similarities and/or differences of the fathers and sons in both stories? (15 points)

Answer for Question 3:

In *Crickets* and *A Family Supper*, the father-son relationship is clearly similar in the strange of view point of life and living. In the other hand in *Crickets*, father tries to approach to his son but in *A Family Supper* the son came back to open up his mind to his father after the two years of being estrange. The conflict of these two story are from the instinct of parents to protect their children from the obstacles but the little children can understand hardly because their life is full of beauty and happiness. But when they grow up, they are understand the life and their parents' opinion better. And all of the most thing in this world, there is nothing be having more power that pure love between parents and their children. The love of giving breathe by no expecting of refunding.

(Naree Mid-term Examination Paper)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From her writing, it is noticeable that Naree's answers to both questions were rather short and contained many English errors which affected the overall understanding of the message she wanted to present in her writing. In both answers, Naree's presentation of critical ideas was not seen clearly evidenced as she did not provide enough evidences from the stories to support her

answer. What she wrote appeared confused and this could probably due to her 'panic' feeling that she talked to me in the interview. Thus, it is clear that Naree's limited resources in language are a restriction to her presentation and development of critical thinking in her writing.

### **Teacher's feedback on assignments and examination papers**

From the above excerpts, it is noticeable that there are many grammatical mistakes in them such as subject-verb agreement, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and so on. Although those mistakes are not serious ones, they sometimes become problems for a Thai teacher like Ajarn Sodsai who even intuitively understands the differences between English and Thai sentence structure. Those mistakes occasionally seem to be an obstacle to the understanding of the ideas that Naree wants to present in her writing. Naree is going to be an English teacher in a primary school and she also plans to take her Master's degree in English later on. Thus, in my view, her English grammatical mistakes may be significant problems for her career and study when she steps into the wider world outside the university. In general, her teacher did not pay attention to these grammatical mistakes at all as she did not seriously mark or correct any of them in the writing. Neither did the teacher even give feedback or comments on the answers in her writing. All she did was to write down the mark in the margin next to each answer.

In the second interview with Naree, I asked her about this point and Naree commented that,

I think it might be much better if Ajarn Sodsai gave comments or feedback to each students' writings. It would help me to aware of my incorrect grammatical points so that I could be able to improve it later on. In fact, it would be the best thing if she did not return students' writings back very so late like this. I like the teaching method of Ajarn Sodsai, but I thought that, for me, she would be a perfect teacher if she always gave feedback on students' writing.

According to Bailin *et al.* (1999), teachers can help foster critical thinking in students by involving three components:

1. Engaging students in dealing with tasks that call for reasoned judgments or assessments.
2. Helping them develop intellectual resources for dealing with these tasks, and
3. Providing an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to thinking critically and engaged in critical discussion (p. 299)

We can see that Ajarn Sodsai, in her *English Literature II* class, was successful in the third point suggested by Bailin *et al.* as I have mentioned in earlier. She also did well in the first point by providing the writing tasks for the students to practise their criticality. However, it seems that she did not pay much importance to the second point raised by Bailin *et al.* in the way she did not give feedback on students' writing as often as necessary. We can see that, regarding the written tasks given to the students, Ajarn Sodsai was not successful in 'helping them develop intellectual resources for dealing with those tasks'. However, she tried her best to encourage them to practise their criticality in class.

## **Naree's assignments before the final examination**

The characteristics of assignments before the final examination have been given earlier in Chapter 5, *Written assignments before final examination* (see p. 154).

The following are examples of questions and answers from the seventh assignments: *A Farmer and his Wife*:

Question 1: What kind of life do the farmer and his wife have and how do they cope with it?

Answer to Question 1:

The farmer and his wife have very poverty life. As many products and the western's way of life which people calls it is civilized comes very fast, they are facing many things they don't understand. And these take their children, there hears, away. Their children leave them behind and never come to see them again. For their poverty life, they live with it for very long time as a closed friend because it feeds them to be alive and so do their children too.

and,

Question 2: Despite all difficulties, what makes the farmer and his wife continue to stay on their land? Is it powerful enough for them to do so?

Answer to Question 2:

The farmer's way of life is full of doing very hard work and gains a little benefit but this is the same work as their parents and their grandparents. They love this barren land because it is only one land that their ancestor was born and died here. This barren land gives their ancestor's life, so they keep this land for this land will give life to their children and their grandchildren as it gives life to them so. This land is the great represent of love and relation from one to another one age. And the reason they still do this hard work is the chain of love from their parents and grandparents that ties them together and as this field still green and turns golden, this chain will be still alive. As this field still alive, it may tie their children too.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From each answer, we can see that, although the teacher did not call for Naree's criticality by providing the follow-up questions such as 'why' or 'why not' or ask her to provide any reasons or evidence from the story to support her answer, Naree tried to provide the reasons and examples to support her answer.

Apart from the above two questions in the seventh story, *A Farmer and his Wife*, this kind of question also appeared in the tenth story, *Mabel*:

Question 5: Without seeing each other for many years after engagement, do you think it is possible for a man or a woman to be still faithful to his/her fiancée? What makes him/her change or not change their mind?

Answer to Question 5:

I think that it is possible for a man or a woman to be faithful to his/her fiancée because in an engagement, it has to have some reason. When the engagement occurred by whatever reason, it is the promise which both of them should follow but the relationship is important than keeping the word. I think that if the person has close relationship with his or her fiancée, the reason which can break their marriage is the death. In the other hands, no one wants to sleep in the same bed with the stranger for all of one's life.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

From the three examples provided above, we can see that although the teacher did not provide questions that required Naree's use of reasons or critical thinking to support her answer, Naree could practise it well by herself. This is different from what she did in the assignments early in the semester. It seems that after the first half of the semester passed by, Naree learned how to answer questions by providing more examples and reasons to support her answers.

However, apart from the three examples provided above, approximately 85 per cent of all questions for the assignments before the final examination were still in form of open-ended questions with follow-up questions. An example may be seen in the eighth story, *Crickets*:

Question 2: Is there any conflicts between the narrator and his son? Give reasons from the story to support your answer.

Answer for Question 2:

The main conflict is the difference in their background that effects their views about love and life. For the father who live with worries and fight because of the Vietnam War and then Saigon fell, he hope that his son will be brave and active and know that life is fight. However, for his son who live in the peaceful period and place after the war, life is having fun and being convenience as watching cartoon from the television. These are the main conflicts that make both of them see the world in the different view and build an invisible line between each other.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

According to Naree's answer, we see that she could provide a good discussion about the conflict between the characters in the story with enough evidence and examples to support it. It is clear that as the time passed by, Naree could gain not only knowledge and understanding about the content of the short story itself but also knowledge and understanding of the literary devices like 'conflict' in the story. She knew the meaning of 'conflict' in the story and could give enough evidence to support what she thought. Naree's literary knowledge, for example about conflict of characters, indicates that she can practise criticality in Barnett's first levels (discipline-specific critical thinking skills) of the first domain (formal knowledge). Additionally, Naree could also reach the second levels (self-reflection) of the second domain (critical self-reflection) in the way she could present her critical thinking and reflect on her understanding about what was asked in the assignment question. However, Naree's problem with English language remains in her writing. Her length of answer is not much longer than in the previous assignments before the mid-term exam.

The following is an example of the last question from the last story in this course, *The Boarding House*:

Question 5: It can be said that Joyce's The Boarding House shows a 'peculiar' human relationship, especially between a mother and a daughter,

or a man and a woman. Describe one of these and give examples to support your answers.

Answer to Question 5:

Mr. Doran and Polly represent thoughts of both sexes. Man wants to be single and doesn't care to have sexual relationship with some woman. But he always really concern about his woman which would become his wife. As a woman, I know that everyone wants to have stable status of her life and marriage and I believe that Polly also feels the same. I guess that it is the reason of Mrs Mooney why she chooses her father's foreman to be a husband of her daughter and to continue her business. But the fate always plays with us, and I believe in the circle of sin.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

We can see that Question 5 in this story is more complicated than other questions as it asks about human relationships in the story. Naree answered the question quite well, showing her understanding of the nature of man and woman. Moreover, she also presented her own idea as a woman in the way she wrote, 'As a woman, I know that everyone wants to have stable status of her life and marriage and I believe that Polly also feels the same.' We can see that, in this last assignment, Naree began to present more of herself and her personal ideas in her writing that I considered as a good development of her critical thinking practice. However, the last sentence of Naree's answer where she wrote 'But the fate always plays with us, and I believe in the circle of sin', appears unclear, as she did not elaborate on what she wrote at all. The teacher, Ajarn Sodsai, did not comment or question Naree on this point when she returned the assignment.

## Final examination paper

The description of the final examination paper was discussed in Chapter 5, section *Final examination paper* (see p. 171). The complete final examination questions were provided in Appendix L – *Final examination questions*.

It appears that Naree performed better in this examination despite the shorter duration of time provided for it (two hours to finish five questions instead of three, as in the mid-term examination). Although there were some grammatical errors in her writing, the average length of her essays is longer than those in the mid-term examinations. She wrote with more critical ideas and gave precise evidence to support her reasons in some answers. This can be seen in her answer for Question 5 in the final examination where she wrote that:

I learn so much from this course. Every story I read and had a chance to share idea with friends and the teacher, I could see and understand the nature of human better. I can see both of the dark spot in the bright and the bright in the dark.

The best example of human's nature is Conratin and Mrs De Robb, they live by eating the other's painfulness. This idea drives them to live for seeing other's fate. But from the dark side of both are our precedent that confirm us about the Buddha's dharma about being spiteful would not make anything be better but it is like the fire that always burn everything even ourself. From this story, the revenge makes them try to be alive but it burns them all the time too.

From The Killers, I can see clearly about human's instinct that is presented by the reaction of these characters, Nick, George, Sam and Ole causes by the violence. Nick is the youngest character. When he faces with the bad situation, he seems to be doing nothing but when he is calmed down, he becomes the hero. For George, he can control his consciousness well and he is thoughtful when he faces with the two killers. Sam is a peaceful man. He doesn't want to be being like a fish without water. It is none of his business about this criminal and he thinks that it is better to be far from this situation and having eyes which are not see and ears which are can't hear anything about this situation. Finally about Ole, he shows the instinct of survive, he tries to escape but at last, he accepts that he couldn't escape the problem for all of his life but it is better to face with it.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Naree.)

During the second interview, I asked her about what she did in the final examination. Naree told me that she felt more satisfied with what she had written in this examination than the previous one and did not have any problems with the shorter period of time for this examination. This is because she gained some experience from the mid-term exam, enabling her to do better in this one. However, she realised that she did not do as well as she expected in all five questions. She did not do so well in Questions 2 and 3. Naree told me that:

For this exam, time is more limited than the mid-term exam. In the mid-term exam, I had two hours to do the three questions. But, in this exam, the length of time is still the same, but there were five questions to finish. It caused me to be under a lot of stress, however; I decided to do my best. Surprisingly, in stressful situations like that I think I can write better than ever. Maybe this is what Ajarn Sodsai wanted us to learn – learning from the real experience.

I further asked about her opinion of the questions in the final exam, and Naree stated that:

All the five questions are not easy to answer. I think that they were more difficult and complicated than the mid-term exam questions. However, because of the limitation of time when compared to the number of questions, I did not have much time to waste choosing the right words or right sentences. I just wrote out what was in my head. As you can see from my exam answers, I wrote some answers in such a short length without sufficient evidence or reasons to support my answer. I think that it would be much better if we have one more extra hour for this exam.

(Naree Interview 2)

According to Naree's answer in the given example from her final exam, we can see that on average the length of her writing is longer than the ones in her mid-term exam. The average word count for Naree's answers in her final examination is approximately 250 words as opposed to 150 words on average in the mid-term exam. In her answers for final exam, the longest was to Question 5, consisting of 303 words, while the longest ones in the mid-term

examination consisted of 156 words. Furthermore, in her answers Naree could provide more of her ideas and religious teaching to support her opinions in her answer. Although many limitations such as the language ability remain, she performed better in the final exam.

## **Second interview with Naree**

The second interview with Naree was carried out a few days after the final examination. The interview was conducted in Thai with an audio recording. The duration of this interview was approximately 15 minutes, shorter than the first interview as there were not so many detailed questions. The questions asked in the second interview were mainly corresponding to those asked to Ajarn Sodsai in her second interview. The interview topics were: teaching methods; teaching material; assignments and examinations; and the students' perception of the course.

### **Teaching methods**

First, I asked Naree about her feelings about Ajarn Sodsai's teaching methods throughout the semester, and she said that:

I really like Ajarn Sodsai teaching methods not only in this class but also in the previous class that I took with her. However, I'm not sure about how other students feel about her teaching methods as Ajarn Sodsai does not always provide ready answers for students in the way other teachers do. She always encourages students to think and to find out the answer by themselves for the first hand. She always use open-ended questions to us like 'Why?', 'Why not?', 'How do you think about this, that, those...?' and so on. You know, this teaching method reminds me of the way my mother taught me when I was a child. For example, when I asked my mother why the Sun always follows us everywhere we go, my mother did not give me the answer right away. Instead, she asked me back about how I think about that. This method

encourages me to think in a great deal and it is like the way Ajarn Sodsai does in her class. I love it.

(Naree Interview 2)

I further asked Naree for comment on Ajarn Sodsai' teaching methods in the way she always provided personal experience, vivid examples and illustrations to the students in class. For this question, Naree interestingly responded that it is helpful for her understanding of the story, especially when it contains different cultural or personal backgrounds. The way Ajarn Sodsai provided vivid examples helped her to figure out what happened in the stories more clearly and enabled her to understand and analyse them more easily.

Furthermore, I asked Naree about the way Ajarn Sodsai used both English and Thai throughout this course. She commented that,

I'm satisfied with the way she used both English and Thai in class. Although I'm an English major student, my English is still not that perfect and I can't understand every single word in English at all especially in a difficult subject like English literature ... no way. The way Ajarn Sodsai sometimes explains the story in Thai helps me so much. Some vocabulary and sentences are too difficult or complicated to understand if they were explained in English. So, it is much better to use Thai sometimes as it helps me that much to better understand and interpret the stories.

(Naree Interview 2)

### **Teaching materials**

The next topic I asked Naree about is the teaching materials for this class. I asked Naree about her feelings on the 11 stories that she studied throughout the semester:

I think some stories are very difficult to understand especially the stories in second half of the semester. I mean the stories after the mid-term exams. However, I like the way Ajarn Sodsai begins the course with the story *The Teacher*. She is very smart in choosing the story for us who are all teacher-to-

be students. This story is not too difficult to understand and its content is very close to our lives who are going to be teachers next year.

(Naree Interview 2)

Then I asked Naree about how she felt about the other stories,

I think the later stories are more complicated and deal more and more with people's lives. They are all about human relationships within family and also outside the family. The content and language is much more difficult as well. I have to read each story more than once in order to understand each story. However, I think the more difficult and complicated the more it encourages me to think.

(Naree Interview 2)

In this course, Ajarn Sodsai provided the definition of some difficult vocabulary in the stories to the students. I asked Naree about whether it is a good idea to provide such definition to students or not and she answered:

I think she is very kind in doing so. It is a very good idea to provide definitions of difficult vocabulary for us or else we must spend double time to read each story. You know, just reading and understanding each story is tiring and hard enough for me. This method helps me to have more time to re-read the story in order to do better analysis or interpretation.

(Naree Interview 2)

## **Assignments and examinations**

The next interview topic is about assignments and examinations provided in this course. I asked Naree about how she felt about how all assignments and examinations were in the form of writing instead of the multiple choice format provided by some teachers in other courses. Naree commented that:

I really like the written assignments and exams because I don't have to recite anything to answer the questions. I love to think rather than memorising or

reciting. All questions in assignments and exams are open and ask for opinion rather than fact. I think this kind of question encourages me to think wider and deeper. Ajarn Sodsai is not very strict in the answer. She is always open and reasonable. She is also not very strict in grammatical correctness as well. However, I think it might be a bit better if she gave more comments on students' writing because it will help me realise the mistakes I made in my writing.

(Naree Interview 2)

### **Students' attitude and perception of the course**

The last part of the interview was about the students' perception of this course and Naree gave an interesting comment:

For me, this course does not only allow me to know more about interesting short stories, but it also teaches me more about life. The stories that we learned in this course is applicable to life. It is all about human nature. It is like the question that Ajarn Sodsai asked in the final exam which is about human nature.

(Naree Interview 2)

Then I asked her to elaborate on how she thinks this course is applicable to life. Naree said that:

It helps me to understand more about human nature. This is very important not only in present when I'm still a student, but also when I'm working in the world outside this university. It is the real world that I have to face up with. I think I'm lucky to have a chance to study literature because it allows me to know more about people and about the world. From reading the stories, I realise that all people are different. Each story I read in this course represents different kinds of people whom I may have to deal with in the future. I can understand more of myself, more of people and more of life. It will help me that much when I graduate and work with others. You know, I can still remember a sentence from one literature course which is 'Literature is a mirror of life'. Now I understand it very well.

(Naree Interview 2)

Naree commented that 'I can understand more of myself, more of people and more of life'. We can see literature's relation to Barnett's (1997) three domains: the domain of reason, self and the world. Naree possessed criticality, making her understand more of herself and people around her, and she knows how to apply it to her life in the form of reflexive practice

## **Naree's criticality development over the semester**

Naree's criticality development over the semester can be categorised into the several aspects regarding its relationship to Barnett's (1997) and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework for criticality together with literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991).

### **Perception and practice**

In general, Naree's perception and practice of criticality developed well over the semester. In fact, she is a student who had a clear understanding and perception of critical thinking since the beginning of the semester. Throughout the semester, it appeared that her understanding and perception of critical thinking developed steadily. The evidence can be seen from not only what she said in her first interview at the beginning of the semester and the second interview conducted at the end of it, but also in her answers for the assignments and examinations in which she could present her ideas critically by applying the knowledge from the stories. For example in her first and second interviews, we can see the development of her formal knowledge and critical action in the form of problem-solving clearly. In her first interview, Naree explained how studying English literature helped her to get more understanding about the truth that no one is perfect which led her to think more critically and accept the differences in friends and people around herself (see pp. 184-185). Further evidence can be seen when Naree mentioned how studying literature helped her to better understand the uncertainty of life and then realise the uncertain nature of things around her. Comparing her

problems in life to those of the characters in the stories can help her to solve those problems (see p. 187).

In her second interview, the development of Naree's criticality in the three domains: formal knowledge, the self and the world was clearly seen from her comment about the practicality of what she learned in this course as it helped her to understand more about life of people. The knowledge she achieved from this course was also applicable to life as she realised that each character and each story reflected different kinds of human nature which she would encounter in the future steps of her life. She further explained that this realisation enabled her to understand more of herself, more of people and more of life. It helped her to understand the significance of literature towards life particularly in the way how literature becomes a mirror of life (p. 214).

Naree's interviews signified that she perceived criticality as important not only to her study of literature but in other subjects as she realised that literature gave her a chance to learn life in miniature and it gave her a chance to learn different kinds of life and people before entering the real world. This made her perceive criticality as important for her life especially when she graduates and enters the world outside the university. Learning how to think critically in the literature classroom could develop her first domain of criticality i.e. formal knowledge which enabled her to reach the second domain i.e. the self and know more about herself in form of critical self-reflection. Regarding the third domain, Naree could also apply this kind of thinking in the form of critical action in her life. The clear evidence can be seen from her first and second interviews which she said about how she could apply what she learned from the literary text to make decisions and solve problems in her life. For example, in her first interview, Naree said that she started to understand that problems can occur although we try to avoid them. This enabled her to know how to cope with those problems by being calm and thinking critically about the nature of the problem in order to find the best solution for them (see p. 185). From this interview, we can see that Naree had some criticality capacities even at the beginning of the semester. She had a good perception of critical

thinking and used it as a means to understand life problems such as the conflict with her sister and finally finds a way to solve her problem by herself (see also p. 185).

In her second interview, Naree told me about her impression of the myth *Pandora's box* which she learned from her previous literature course, *Legend and Folklore*. She considered this myth as a practical explanation for the causes of difficulties and problems in life. When she faced any problems, this myth reminded her that the world is not that bad and hope is still left for her in the box. This becomes a good resolution for all kinds of problems in her life (see p. 198). We can see that Naree could well apply material from the previous literature course in her essay for the present course. What she explained in her interviews and what she wrote in her essay (see pp.197-198) clearly shows Naree's criticality development in terms of perception and practice over the semester.

Evidence for Naree's criticality development is presented not only in her interviews but also in her written assignments and examination papers. In her short essay assigned for the story, *The Teacher*, Naree presented her criticality in the domains of formal knowledge and the self as she wrote in the assignment that if she could talk to the student who committed suicide in the story, she would tell him that life consists of happiness and sadness and he would have to confront both of them all through his life. She further wrote that she would tell the story of *Pandora's box* that she had learned from *Legend and Folklore* course to that student in order to make him realise that suffering is an unavoidable truth in everyone's life. However, we all have hope which is a powerful weapon that can help us to pass beyond that suffering (see Naree's short essay – *The Teacher*, p. 197). From her writing, we can see that Naree reached the first domain well by practising the formal knowledge and critical reason she attained from her previous literary course (*Legend and Folklore*) and critically applied it in the domain of self in the form of critical self-reflection.

In her final examination papers, despite the shorter time than in the mid-term examination, Naree could also present her criticality particularly well in the first and second domains i.e. formal knowledge and self-reflection respectively. Evidence can be seen in her answer for Question 5 of the final examination that she could learn a great deal from this course and from having the chance to share ideas and discuss with friends and the teacher. This enabled her to see and understand more about her life and human nature. This knowledge enabled her to understand that life contains both positive and negative aspects (see *Naree's Final examination paper*, p. 208).

From the assignments, examinations and interviews, we can see that Naree could reach the first and second domains of criticality. However, her criticality development in the third domain i.e. the world in the form of critical action is not clearly witnessed from her writings because of her limited English ability. It is also difficult to see her actual critical action in the limited time and space of a classroom or interviews. However, this does not mean that Naree could not practise critical action. From what I witnessed I am confident that she will demonstrate critical action in future but it could not be accessed in the fieldwork. Regarding the level of criticality in each domain, it is clear that Naree could reach only the first and second levels of each domain i.e. in the form of critical skills and reflexivity respectively. Clear examples of her levels of criticality development have already been provided and discussed on p. 184 and p. 207.

Naree's practice in a classroom was also related to the intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999). She could respond well to Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches which always provided her personal experience, vivid examples and explanations for the stories. Naree could develop her background knowledge particularly the cultural background in a specific context which is not familiar to her. The evidence can be seen in the eleventh classroom observation when Naree mentioned in the class that the story *Crickets* described much about Autumn which she had never actually seen and she asked Ajarn Sodsai to describe the appearance

of the season for her (see p.140). Apart from providing a vivid explanation of Autumn to Naree, Ajarn Sodsai also used follow up questions which asked her about the implication and relationship of Autumn to the story. From this question, Naree was provided with a chance to practise other intellectual resources which are knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind. Furthermore, it is clear that Naree could possess 'critical concepts', the third intellectual resource proposed by Bailin *et al.* The evidence is shown when she could distinguish metaphorical and literal language by answering a question which asks about the 'conflict' between the characters in the story *Cricket* (see p. 206).

## **Language and ideas**

In terms of language, Naree did not significantly develop particularly in her writing skills. Since the beginning of the semester, We can see from her assignments and mid-term examination paper, that Naree had difficulties in the use of English, in terms of grammatical structure, word choices, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and so on, from the beginning of the semester. All these limitations led to difficulties in expressing the messages and ideas that Naree would like to convey in her answers. Although Naree had opportunities to practise her English skills from another course i.e. *Creative Reading in English for Teachers*, at the end of the semester these language problems had still not been resolved. The evidence can be seen clearly in many of her written assignments and final examination paper which illustrate that Naree still had the same kinds of language problems in her writing. This is possibly because the teacher of this course did not have enough time to give individual feedback or comments on each student's writing, and also probably because of Naree's limited English. However, the focus of this course is not on writing but on literary knowledge and the development of critical idea in students. Moreover, writing skills themselves also take a long time to develop. Although she had a chance to learn from reading by seeing examples of good and correct English, it is unlikely that Naree's writing skills could develop in this course over a period of only one semester.

However, in terms of her speaking skills, Naree had been able to speak English well since the beginning of the semester. She could speak in long, complex sentences which presented both her interpretation and critical thinking related to the stories she read throughout the semester. During class, she always tried to answer or discuss the topics provided by the teacher in English. Unfortunately, due to the large size of the class, she did not have opportunities to speak much. When she said something in incorrect sentence patterns or with wrong word choices, the teacher always gave Naree direct comments and corrections at once. Thus, throughout the semester, Naree had a chance to develop her English speaking skills, which developed more than her writing skills. At the end of the semester, she seemed more confident to express her ideas in English both by asking, answering questions and engaging in discussion with the teacher in English for answers which were not too complicated. Clear evidence is already provided and discussed in the last paragraph of the previous section *Perception and practice* (see p. 215). Further evidence can be seen in the thirteenth classroom observation (see pp. 181-182). Naree answered and had discussion with Ajarn Sodsai about the story *A Family Supper*. From her answer to Ajarn Sodsai, we can see that although Naree sometimes seemed reluctant to answer, and discussed her ideas with friends before answering the questions, she was confident in presenting her ideas by providing clear explanations and supporting her answers with illustrations from the story, using English at all times, in her conversation with Ajarn Sodsai.

Throughout the semester Naree developed well in terms of the quality of her ideas. With the assistance of the teacher, and teaching methods that support critical thinking in the students by asking questions and encouraging an class atmosphere where critical thinking was welcome, Naree could express ideas and develop her critical thinking. She could give exact or vivid examples or evidence to support her answer both in her writing and her answers in class, but not in speaking because of the large and teacher-centred class. However, it is noticeable that, in class, her ideas were presented with more criticality when delivered in Thai rather than in English. She appeared more confident

when using Thai to discuss difficult or complicated topic (see pp.179-180). In general, Naree has difficulties in presenting her ideas critically in English as language is one of the main barriers for the expression of her critical thinking and ideas. The limitation in language resource clearly affects her critical development in the English literature class. We can see that language and ideas are related in terms of the development of criticality in the students for whom English is a foreign language, like Thai students. Naree is a student with ideas and critical thinking, but she is limited in her capacity to express ideas by the quality of her English.

### **Length of writing**

The development of Naree's criticality may be seen clearly in her writing, both in her assignments and examination papers, especially in the final examination paper when she presented more developed pieces of writing than at the beginning of semester. Although Naree's writing competency and skills were not much developed during the semester, we can see that the length of her writing has developed to some extent. The development could not be seen clearly in her assignments as she kept writing at approximately the same length i.e. 120 words per each question. However, the significant development in the length of Naree's writing can be seen clearly her answer for the mid-term and final examinations. However, as mentioned earlier in the section *Final examination paper* (see pp. 208), the average word count for Naree's answer in her final examination appears longer with approximately 250 words instead of 150 words in average as in the mid-term exam. The longest answer for her final examination consists of 303 words while the longest one in the mid-term examination consists of 156 words.

This answer is also significant in term of the ideas that Naree presented. This is considered one of Naree's best developed pieces of writing in the way she could develop her ideas critically. For example, Naree gave more evidence from the story, and more vividly, to support the reasoned and critical thinking in her answers. Also, she gave examples from her real life experience and

applied them to support her answers for the assignments and examinations. Thus, we can see that, throughout the semester, Naree developed not only the length of her writing but her critical thinking particularly in the first two levels of Barnett's framework in forms of critical skills and reflexivity, as well as an ability to work within the limitations of time.

## **Participation**

Naree remains an outstanding student in term of her participation in class from the early beginning until the end of the semester. She is an enthusiastic student who always participated in class and responded well to the activities that the teacher provided in class. It appears that she participated well throughout the semester especially in the later weeks before the end of the semester. A clear example can be seen when she raised some interesting discussion topics with the teacher by herself (see section *Participation in class*, pp. 178-180). Even though the discussion was in Thai, it clearly showed that Naree felt more confident in sharing her ideas and discussing in class in a more analytical and critical way which is different from the early period of the semester.

## **Naree's response to the literature teaching approaches**

There is a relationship between the data analysis of Naree and the three literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991): the cultural model, the personal growth model and the language-based model.

Regarding the cultural model, it appeared that Naree could respond well to Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approach which always provided vivid and clear explanations for the unfamiliar cultural context in the literary text (see pp. 139-140). Clear evidence of Naree's positive response to Ajarn Sodsai's practice of the cultural model can be seen in her second interview where she stated that this teaching approach was very helpful for her understanding of the story

particularly when it is dealing with some specific unfamiliar cultural context. This teaching approach encouraged her to understand not only the different culture, but also her own culture more clearly (see p. 211).

Naree also had a good response to Ajarn Sodsai's practice of the personal growth model and Reader-response theory in the literature classroom due to her personal characteristics of being active, out-going and self-confident. Naree always related her personal experience in the interviews and her written assignments. This practice enabled me to clearly see her personal growth. Evidence was clearly presented in her essay writing for the first short story, *The Teacher* which she could make links between her own personal experience and the literary text that she learned in class (p. 197). Further evidence of was clearly presented in her second interview where I asked her about this essay. Naree explained that she could get insight into the character's mind and totally understood his feeling because she used to feel the same and be in the same situation as him (see p. 198). Moreover, Naree could present her personal growth in her answer for Question 5 in the final examination paper. She could respond and relate to the themes in the story by creating a relationship to her personal lives (see p. 209).

As for the language-based model, it is clear that Naree did not respond well to this literature teaching model as her English language skill did not develop much during the course. This is probably because Ajarn Sodsai's focus was not on the students' practice of language and the aim of her literature teaching was not at exploring an interrelationship between language and meaning in literary text. Instead, in her first interview, Ajarn Sodsai stated clearly that her aim in literature teaching is to encourage students to gain knowledge and critical thinking from studying literature and then apply that criticality in the form of decision making or problem solving to their lives in the future (see p. 157). Thus, we can see that among the three literature teaching models, the cultural model and the personal growth model are the most powerful in influencing Naree's criticality development in the literature classroom.

## Conclusions

In this chapter, we have seen Naree's development over the semester in response to her cultural and classroom context, to Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches, and practice in writing and talking. Naree responded to these different influences according to her individual preferences and capability. Her criticality development is clearly related to certain domains and levels of criticality in Barnett's (1997) theoretical framework and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. From the data analysis, it is clear that the development of Naree's criticality in the three domains described by Barnett could be accomplished in an integrated way, particularly through the application of effective teaching approaches from the teacher. The detailed discussion of this development is provided in Chapter 8, section *Naree and Kanda's criticality development over the semester* (see p. 291).

In addition, Naree's criticality development could also be related to the three literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991). We can see her cultural development and personal growth in responding to Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches. However, there is little space for language development in the classroom and during the semester because the course did not focus on the use of language or how linguistic forms in a literary work convey meaning to the readers.

In the next chapter, I will present the data analysis of another case study student, Kanda.

# Chapter 7

## Data Analysis of the Case Study Student: Kanda

### Introduction

This part of the data analysis will present another case study student, Kanda (a pseudonym) and will explore themes which emerged from the collected data. I will write the case study in a descriptive and chronological way according to the data sources collected from the case study student which were provided in Chapter 4, section *Three stages of the data presentation* (see p.129).

### Background to the case study student: Kanda

Kanda (pseudonym) is a 20-year-old education student majoring in English. As an education student in her fourth year of study Kanda had to spend eight months in a junior high school on teaching practice, then return to finish her degree. Like Naree, Kanda had a scholarship from the Royal Thai government and must be a teacher for three years at a school in her hometown after graduating. Regarding her background in English literature, Kanda took her first course in English literature in her second year of study and has taken five literature courses altogether. The present course on which she enrolled this semester, *English Literature II*, is her sixth literature course, the final one before she graduates.

## Why I am writing about Kanda

I chose Kanda as my case study student because of her characteristics and practice in a classroom. She is representative of the typical Thai student who is usually silent and submissive in class. Despite being so in class, Kanda was a clever and hard working student in terms of her study, and always attentive and supportive to her friends, a friendly, good-tempered, humble, tidy, mild-mannered, and likeable person.

However, compared to Naree, Kanda was less talkative and more reserved. She did not talk much about stories in her life or give me clear examples of her ideas and opinions, unlike Naree. Thus, in the interviews, I did not obtain as many personal life experiences as from Naree. Although she appeared timid and shy in class, Kanda was keen to participate in my fieldwork, probably because she wanted to contribute to English literature teaching and learning practice, a course that she liked. After I had explained to her the purpose of this study, she immediately volunteered to participate in the interviews and agreed to be audio recorded.

In class, she was an outstanding student with a cumulative GPA of 3.32. In general, Kanda was always well prepared and all her work was carefully and promptly done. She was always punctual and came to class on time which suggests she was a responsible person. Kanda's English was of a high standard. She had quite high levels of reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, and could speak quite fluently but with limited vocabulary. This is typical of Thai students regarding their performance in English. In fact, I did not have many chances to hear Kanda's speaking as I conducted her interview in Thai. Moreover, since she was not a talkative person she did not talk or express her ideas in English much during the class observation. However, Kanda's writing skills were good. She could write in correct grammatical sentences with a wide range of vocabulary. Sometimes her sentences appear unclear, redundant and have some grammatical mistakes; however, these mistakes are not so serious that her sentences become difficult to understand.

## Classroom observations

### Kanda's participation in class

Kanda was a punctual student who never came to class late and a responsible student who missed no classes throughout the semester. When in class, Kanda always sat in the first row at the front of the classroom. She paid good attention and concentrated in every lesson. Her attention to class was evident by her making eye contact and nodding her head in response to what Ajarn Sodsai said. Kanda had a notebook for taking notes while listening to the lecture. This shows her attention to her study in this course, as the other students just made notes in the text book.

Although Kanda was a good student who attended closely, she was always silent and did not participate much in class. Throughout the semester, she was never the first student to raise her hand in answer to the teacher's questions. She answered her questions aloud in class infrequently, approximately once every three to four weeks. Because of the large class size together with her personal characteristics, Kanda did not have much opportunity to participate in class, although Ajarn Sodsai always provided a large number of questions and discussion topics for her students. However, this does not mean that she never answered or had discussion in class. Usually she answered the teacher's questions after her friends did, or answered it softly to herself instead of saying it aloud. Every time she answered or had a discussion with the teacher, she did it well. An example can be seen in the first class, *The Teacher*:

Ajarn Sodsai What do you know more about her family?

Students [Silent]

Ajarn Sodsai I mean, what do you know more about her father, her mother and what happened to her family?

Students [Silent]

Ajarn Sodsai Kanda, do you want to share any ideas?

Kanda Yes. From an essay that she wrote it shows that the father doesn't want Tan Geong Peck to study. He always scolds at her and he got drunk all the times.

Ajarn Sodsai Good. What else?

Kanda For the mother, she got sick and very weak from delivering a new baby.

Ajarn Sodsai Very good. Next, how about the financial status for her family?

Kanda Her family is very poor.

Ajarn Sodsai How do you know? Did it tell you directly so?

Kanda No, but I can imply from what the girl wrote in her essay about her family. Her father wanted her to leave school and help him in making and selling cakes to earn money for the whole family.

(Observation 2 -The Teacher)

It is clear that Kanda could give good answers to the teacher's questions, but she did not willingly so herself. She only responded to direct questions when the teacher asked her. She could discuss issues effectively with the teacher with appropriate use of English. From her answer, we can see that she could also make inferences from what she read which is vital. Her answers showed that she read thoroughly and thoughtfully before class so she could integrate well, as in the last question about the financial status of the main character's family.

In my first interview with Kanda, I asked her about the reason that she was never willingly the first student to volunteer to answer or have a discussion in class, with particular reference to this incident in the second observation.

Kanda said:

I'm not sure for the reason. Umm, probably because I think my English is not good enough. My accent is not that good and while speaking I can't think much about the appropriate vocabulary to use.

(Kanda Interview 1)

However, I explained Kanda to that her English is proficient and she could always give good answers in class, and I asked her for further reasons why she did not want to participate in class. Kanda told me:

I'm not a self-confident person. Although I have been a teacher trainee for a semester, I still feel excited and nervous whenever I have to speak in public. In fact, I don't feel so excited in this class because we are familiar to each other. I know that Ajarn Sodsai is very kind and she will not blame me if I raised my hand and give her a wrong answer. However, I think that if I don't answer this question, there must be someone else to answer it or, at last, Ajarn Sodsai will call anyone to answer it. Whenever I was called to answer the questions, I was happy to do so, but I just don't want to be the first person to do it.

(Kanda Interview 1)

What Kanda said above gives us a clear picture of a typical practice of Thai students in classroom. Usually, the students know the answer or have an idea for the discussion, but they just do not want to participate. They prefer to think quietly, sit silently and listen to what other students say. It is only when they are called to participate that they will express themselves and their ideas in class. Even Naree, whose personality appeared more willing to participate than Kanda, did not often participate due to large class size.

### **Use of language in classroom**

At the beginning of the semester, Ajarn Sodsai asked the students to use only English as a mean of communication in class, both with Ajarn Sodsai herself and among friends. However, in practice, Kanda used both Thai and English in answering or having discussions with the teacher. In general, Ajarn Sodsai always gave the lecture and asked questions in English. When Kanda was called to answer the question, she always used English initially. Then, when the questions were too complicated or too difficult, she would always switch to Thai. For example, in the fourth classroom observation, Ajarn Sodsai asked a question about the students' opinion about the story, *Why, Honey?*

Ajarn Sodsai What is your feeling while watching a film based on a story?  
Students [Silent]  
Ajarn Sodsai Does anyone want to share your ideas?  
Students [Silent]  
Ajarn Sodsai Kanda, what do you think about this?  
Kanda Umm...It is very interesting. I think it made me see clearer picture than the story.  
Ajarn Sodsai How?  
Kanda I can see the nonverbal gesture of the character clearer. I can see how the mother feels for her son's aggressive actions that he always did with her.  
Ajarn Sodsai Good. Do you think it is different from reading such a story from the book itself?  
Kanda Umm... [Silent for awhile]...I think watching a film is very different from reading the book itself.  
Ajarn Sodsai Why not?  
Kanda [in Thai] *While reading the story I always feel confused about who is talking, the mother or the son.*  
Ajarn Sodsai [in English] Why so?  
Kanda *Maybe because the writer does not use quotation marks in the story. I cannot see any quotation marks at all.*  
Ajarn Sodsai Wow! You made a very good notice on this point.  
Kanda *This makes me feel somehow confused about the narration and description of the story. However, it is good that the writer always used short and simple sentences which make the story not too difficult and too complicated to follow.*

(Observation 4 – Why, Honey?)

We can see from the transcription above that Kanda could express her ideas more fluently and critically in Thai rather than in English. Kanda's answer in Thai showed more of her analytical and critical thinking in the way she could express more of her feeling towards the story. We can see that, when answering in English, she can just say that '*I think watching a film is very different from reading the book itself.*', but she could not explain the difference. However, when she used Thai Kanda could explain how the film is different from reading by the book by using the Thai adjective meaning

confused about expressing her ideas. Moreover, by using Thai, Kanda could spontaneously make a good point about the use of quotation marks in the story at the end of Ajarn Sodsai's question, without pausing to think about the answers as she did when answering in English. Apart from that, in the last part of the transcription, we can see that Kanda presented more of her critical ideas and feelings without any follow-up questions from Ajarn Sodsai.

### **Peer assistance**

As mentioned earlier, Kanda was representative of a typical Thai student, always attentive but silent and submissive in class. This characteristic was clearly seen during the classroom observations especially when Ajarn Sodsai asked questions or gave out discussion topics. Kanda always listened carefully to what was asked by the teacher. Then she had discussions with friends who sat next to her instead of answering Ajarn Sodsai's questions or discussing the topic directly. It is noticeable that Ajarn Sodsai asked Kanda for the answer quite often. This is probably because Kanda always sat in the first row of the class and was always attentive to what Ajarn Sodsai said, making eye contact all the time.

The following is an example for the practice of peer assistance observed in case of Kanda,

Ajarn Sodsai Why did the son in this story tell a lie to his mother?  
Students [Silent]  
Ajarn Sodsai How do you think about this? Anyone wants to share your idea?  
Naree He did not want to hurt his mother's feeling. He did not want her to feel upset with the exact amount of money that was stolen.  
Ajarn Sodsai Good. Does anyone want to share your idea about this? What do you think about the son? How do call this kind of lie?  
Students [talk softly with friends]  
Ajarn Sodsai C'mon. Just say it out loud.

Kanda & Friends [Talk among themselves in Thai for about a minute -  
*They sat in the first row of the class while I was at the back.*  
*So, I could not hear exactly what they were discussing]*

Ajarn Sodsai Kanda, you seem to have some interesting ideas about this, right? I saw from the way you discussed seriously with your friends.

Kanda [in Thai] [Smiled] *Um, not really. I agreed with Naree that the son did not want to hurt his mother's feeling. He told a lie to her for the sake of her good feeling. I sometimes did it as well.*

Ajarn Sodsai Really? To your mother? When?

Kanda *Not very often. [laughed] I did not like telling a lie to anyone especially to my parents but sometimes I had to do it just to make them not feel too bad about something.*

Ajarn Sodsai Do you know how we call this kind of lie in English?

Kanda *Umm.. I'm not sure. [Turned to talk and discussed with her friends in Thai for a few seconds] Is it called 'white lie'?*

Ajarn Sodsai Excellent! That's right!

(Observation 4 – Why, Honey?)

From the way she did not answer Ajarn Sodsai at once we notice that Kanda is not a self-confident person, but seemed reluctant and discussed with her friends before answering it aloud. She turned to discuss with friends in Thai for about a minute before giving answer to Ajarn Sodsai. While Kanda was discussing with friends, I noticed that most students in class did the same thing, either in pairs or in small groups of three to four people.

During my first interview with Kanda, I asked her about the significance of peer assistance in her study of English literature and also critical thinking in class. Kanda said that,

I find it very helpful to think and discuss with friends. It made me feel more confident about my ideas. I find myself more engaged with the thoughts of my friends. During the discussion, I can think about giving more or less weight to what my friends say. And, to really think about why I don't agree with what they say and to push myself beyond yeah or no. Discussing with friends gave

me more ideas than thinking alone. It helps me make sure that what I think and say out loud to class is not foolish and nonsense.

(Kanda – Interview 1)

The way Kanda discussed with friends does not mean that she did not know the answer or did not have any ideas of her own; it is because she wanted support for her ideas and opinions from friends. Interestingly, what Kanda said especially in the last sentence clearly represents two important Thai personal characteristics of 'face' or 'saving face' and 'uncertainty avoidance'. According to Komin (1991), 'face' or 'saving face' means the avoiding of criticism is extremely important in a collectivist society like Thailand. As a Thai, Kanda also feels that presenting a good image in class is important and that is why she said that '[discussing with friends] helps me make sure that what I think and say out loud to class is not foolish and nonsense'. The way Kanda preferred to be certain by discussing her ideas with friends before presenting it in class also represents the characteristic of 'uncertainty avoidance'. This characteristic refers to 'the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by uncertain or unknown situation and try to avoid such situations' (Hofstede, 1997). We can see from what Kanda said and what she did in class that she did not want to lose face and take risks by presenting her uncertain personal ideas to class.

## **The first interview**

In this section, I will discuss four main themes emerging from my first interview with Kanda i.e. 1) students' perception of the importance of criticality and awareness of their own capability in criticality development, 2) general attitude and impression of studying literature, 3) students' participation in class and their attitude to teaching practices. The detailed information of this interview was previously discussed in Chapter 4, section *Students' interviews* (see p. 114).

## Perception and understanding of criticality

In the first interview, I asked Kanda about her understanding of critical thinking and she gave a thoughtful answer,

In my opinion, critical thinking is a kind of thought that has to be applied in order to understand any certain subjects in order to know the cause and effect. It is a kind of thought that enables us to have a better understanding of things around us. I think it is also a kind of profound thought. It leads me to practise asking myself as 'Why' question.

(Kanda Interview 1)

I asked Kanda for more examples of what she said and she told me that:

For example, in reading literature, I have to use critical thinking in order to understand more about the reason and motive of the character. I have to use critical thinking to ask for the reason why the writer wrote the story in that way. You know, in my free time, I like reading literature but just for pleasure. Usually I read it just for its content, just to know the narration .what, when, where, how. However, after studying literature, I have to ask myself more 'why' questions.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Then I further asked Kanda about how she applied this kind of thinking to her life outside the classroom. Kanda said:

Um, I used it in my life especially when I faced the situations similar to what I read in the story. I applied the way the character thought toward that situation in my life. It does not mean I just copied the decision that character made to mine, but I applied it critically by thinking about its practicality and appropriateness. For example, from the story *The Teacher* that the main character committed suicide because of her personal problems and the teacher in the story did not help to solve it at all. From this story, I asked myself about why the student did that and why the teacher did that. While

reading I made an analysis of the reason that the student committed suicide and then compared that situation to myself.

(Kanda Interview 1)

What Kanda said above can illustrate that she understands the meaning of criticality and can apply it to both her study and her life. Her understanding of criticality can be applied to Barnett's (1997) levels one and two in all three domains (i.e. knowledge, self and the world). In the domain of formal knowledge, we can see that Kanda not only possessed critical thinking skills but also reflected on her understanding of the story that she read. In the domain of the self, Kanda could perform self-monitoring by reflecting on her study and career as a teacher in the near future. She tried to understand the feelings of both the student and the teacher and also tried to figure out the best solution for both of them. Furthermore, Kanda's criticality was applied to the domain of the world in form of critical action as she tried to practise critical thinking through problem-solving and reflective practice in her actions when facing any problems in life. The example can be seen as follows:

Now, I am both the student and the teacher at the same time. So, I can use critical thinking in finding out the best solution if I were in that situation. If I were a student, what should I do? If I were that teacher what should I do? I think critical thinking helps me make better decisions in many situations and problems in life. It helps me have more profound reasons and understanding.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Kanda's application of critical thinking in her life can be seen when she talked about her experience as a teacher trainee:

When I was a teacher trainee, I had to work as if I were a real teacher, I mean not just a trainee. I had to take responsibility for the whole class. I had to design the teaching plans and classroom activities for the students. I had to apply all knowledge I studied in my teacher training classes. I learned that I had to be flexible and not adhere strictly to educational theory that I studied in class. Not all theory can be applied with every student and in every classroom situations. Most of all, I had to apply much critical thinking and

critical reasoning with my colleagues. I had to work with various kinds of people and each of them is different; some are nice, but some are really intolerable. Thus, I had to use much of critical thinking in dealing with them. I had to learn how to approach each of them in the right way or in the right time. I'm really glad that I had a chance to do the teaching training. It was a very important practice for my future career as a teacher.

(Kanda Interview 1)

### **Importance of critical thinking in the literature classroom**

For Kanda, critical thinking is essential both for studying and living in the world. She told me that, in her view, critical thinking in terms of study is not only important for the literature classroom but for every subject. However, she admitted that the literature classes at the university required more critical thinking than other subjects in general, as she said that:

Critical thinking is related and important to every subject and in every level. However, I think, in the university level, I have to use more of critical thinking in most of the classes particularly in the literature classes than other levels. This is because of the teaching and studying style which does not focus on memorizing and rote learning like in the early level. The exams and assignments are generally in the form of writing rather than multiple choices. So, I have to think carefully and critically while studying or doing the exams. For example, in the assignment and exam questions of Ajarn Sodsai, she always gives a short question which is sometimes just only one sentence. However, we have to answer that question in a paragraph and providing enough evidence from the story to support what we think. So, before answering the questions, I have to think critically about the reason, cause, and effect of the ideas I am going to write.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Kanda gave more examples of the importance of critical thinking in the literature classroom. It is not only for answering the examination and assignment questions that Kanda had to practise much critical thinking, but in every literature session.

I think I had to use a lot of critical thinking in the literature classroom in order to get more understanding in each story. For example, in the courses *World Literature* and *English Poetry I*, I had to use a lot of critical thinking in order to understand what the poets wanted to convey in the poem and also to interpret the underlying meaning of the poems. I had to think critically and analytically about the reason that the poets used this or that words instead of other words with the same meaning. For some poems, if we did not read carefully and attentively, it would appear that a poem praised natural beauty. However, if we made a profound interpretation and analysis, we would see that it is an ironic poem that criticizes the society.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Kanda further stated that studying literature is important to her not only in terms of academia, but in terms of life experience. She liked studying literature because it gave her both pleasure in the story and knowledge about the world that she did not have a chance to experience in real life:

I like studying literature because its nature is different from other subjects such as *Academic Writing*, *Oral English Practice* and so on. Literature contains narration in itself which makes it more interesting and fascinating than other subjects. For example, *Legend and Folklore* is the most impressive subject for me. I think it is like reading novels or fairy tales which consists of many charming characters like king, god, monster, witches and so on. This course gave me not only knowledge about culture, world heritage and legends but also knowledge about the origin of words. I learned many word roots from this course which I think is very interesting and very important for me who will be an English teacher in the near future.

(Kanda Interview 1)

We can see that, for Kanda, critical thinking is vital not only in the literature classroom, but in other subjects. Moreover, Kanda also perceived literature as an important subject that enabled her to learn more about life. Kanda could see the importance of literature and its application towards life. She could not only make a link between what she learned in the literature classes and the

world she lives in but apply knowledge from the literature class to herself and the world outside. The evidence can be seen, as she said:

That course [*Legend and Folklore*] enabled me to know more about world history, the nature of humanity and, the evolution of culture. I had a chance to know how Greek and Thai are similar and different in term of culture, idea and practice which I think it is very impressive and important. It is necessary for us to understand not only ourselves, but also people around us in this world.

(Kanda Interview 1)

### **The development of critical thinking in the literature classroom**

When asked about her development of critical thinking in the literature classroom during the semester, Kanda said that it had been developed well not only in this literature course but also in other literature courses:

I think most of the subjects required critical thinking to be applied while studying. However, for me, literature is the course that required critical thinking the most. Studying literature encourages me to practise critical thinking and then I think my critical thinking has been developed well during studying these courses. Generally I like reading especially novels and short stories, but I just read for content and pleasure. I just want to know what happens in the story... I never ask myself 'Why?' with the plot or, the characters. However, after studying literature, I asked myself more and more with the 'Why' questions. That's why I think my critical thinking has been developed well in the literature classroom.

(Kanda Interview 1)

I further asked Kanda about how she applied critical thinking that developed in the literature classroom to other subjects that she studied and she said that:

I can use it in every subject including the subjects in my faculty. For example, in one course... umm... *Advanced Reading I*, which I have to study in this semester. In this course I have to design strategies of reading and select

books that are suitable for students in elementary school. I think I have to use much critical thinking to understand what is needed for students in this age and then select books and design the strategies that are suitable to the age of students. I have to make decisions about the content of the books that will be used, how they are interesting and useful for the students. It is not an easy task for me, however, I can use critical thinking that I practice so often in literature classroom with this course. It can help me a great deal.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Whilst Kanda could not only develop her critical thinking in literature class but apply it to other subjects, the nature of literature enables her to practise critical thinking in class. What Kanda mentioned about how she applied critical thinking developed in there to her educational subjects may be regarded in relation to Barnett's criticality framework of the three domains. Kanda could practice her critical reason in the domain of knowledge in the way she tried to understand the nature of the students in elementary level. Kanda could also practise critical self-reflection in the way she reflected on her knowledge about the nature of the students that she had to deal with. Moreover, she could practise critical action by making a decision about the books suitable to use with the students at such level together, with appropriate teaching strategies.

## **Student's participation in class and attitude to teaching methodologies**

I asked Kanda whether Ajarn Sodsai's teaching methods had influenced her practice of critical thinking in the classroom. She said that Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches were influential in encouraging her to practise and develop critical thinking in the classroom.

The way Ajarn Sodsai always asked questions such as 'why?' 'why so?' 'how do you think about this?' and so on is very helpful in encouraging me to think more and more in class and also after class. Moreover, Ajarn Sodsai always shares her personal experiences that relate to the story to the students. She did not tell us directly about the answer or the direct interpretation of the

story, but this way helps me to understand the story clearly. The more I can understand the story, the more I can develop my thoughts and ideas. In some stories, I compared what happened with the characters in the story with what Ajarn Sodsai said and then with my own experience.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Apart from that, Kanda stated that Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics are also important in encouraging the students to practise critical thinking in class.

Ajarn Sodsai is always open-minded, active and lively in class. She always smiles at the students. She always looks kind, understanding and friendly to us. I never saw her become moody when we could not answer her questions or even when we answered the questions incorrectly. I think this made me feel relaxed and happy while attending her classes. Moreover, she always encourages the students to participate in classes by asking questions and giving topics for class discussion.

(Kanda Interview 1)

According to what Kanda said above, we can see that Ajarn Sodsai tried to foster critical thinking in students by 'providing an environment in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion' (Bailin *et al.*, 1999, p. 299)

### **Language resources**

Although Kanda said that Ajarn Sodsai is friendly and always encouraged students to participate in class and she felt relaxed and happy in her classes, during the classroom observation it was noticeable that Kanda hardly ever volunteered in class. She only participated when called on to do so by the teacher. I asked Kanda for the reason of this and she said that:

One of the reasons is the language. Ajarn Sodsai always uses English in class and she always encourages us to use English to communicate in

class. However, it is quite difficult to do so. Quite often that I just did not know the proper words to use. Umm, I think language is a big barrier for me. Most of the times, I think in Thai and when I have to answer in English it seems that all ideas disappeared immediately. I want to answer but I just don't know how to answer it in English. I always feel so worried about the use of English that I forget the idea I want to answer. It is always difficult to find a right word that can exactly express what I think in my head.

(Kanda Interview 1)

From the interview, we can see that language is an important factor for a student to communicate their ideas effectively and critically.

### **Cultural aspects**

As Kanda stated, language is one of the factors that discourages her from participating in classes. I further asked her whether there were any cultural aspects that discourage her classroom participation. Kanda said that:

Yes, I think seniority is another important factor especially in the class that the teacher is an elder. It makes us feel much more '*kreng jai*' and do not want to ask or express opinions when we don't understand or think differently from what he or she taught in class. I think it is very normal for Thai students to be like this. When I performed my teacher training, the students did not ask me the questions as well although I am not that old. It is like the case of Ajarn Sodsai, she still looks young and not much older than her students. However, I still feel *kreng jai* and do not want to disturb her teaching time by asking the questions which sometimes I think it might be too stupid to ask. I mean I just don't want to disturb her teaching with my silly questions or opinion.

(Kanda Interview 1)

*Kreng jai*, another important Thai personal characteristic, is defined by Komin (1991, p. 164):

...to be considerate, to feel reluctant to impose upon another person, to take another person's feelings (and ego) into account, or to take every measure not to cause discomfort or inconvenience for another person

This feeling of *kreng jai* mentioned by Kanda is a typical characteristic in Thai people. This characteristic leads Thai students to be reluctant to express direct feedback or ask questions to the teachers.

### **Size of class**

Kanda then further mentioned the size of class, which she considered a factor discouraging her from participation. This class consisted of 40 students which was not a large class by the standards of other courses. However, literature courses require participation and discussion between teacher and students, so this number of students may be considered to be large. Kanda commented on this point:

I think the number of students in this is quite large. It might be much better if there were about 10-20 students in class so that we could participate in class more than this. With this number of students, the teacher does not have enough time to ask questions for each of them especially for the students who sit in the back row of the classroom. However, Ajarn Sodsai always uses eye contact with the students. I usually sit in the first row of the classroom, so there are many times that I made eye contact with her and was called to answer her questions. This indirectly pushed me to make me to prepare well for class in order to answer her questions. However, for other students who do not want to answer the questions or participate in class, they just avoid making eye contact with the teacher and sit silently. There are too many students in class, so the teacher does not have time to make eye contact with everyone or call everyone to share idea with her. That's why I told you that it must be better if the class is smaller than this.

(Kanda Interview 1)

### **The knowledge building process: peer assistance**

I also asked Kanda about how she dealt with a text which required a different background or cultural knowledge. Kanda told me that she always had problems in interpreting this kind of text as it led her to confusion and misunderstanding of the message that the writers wanted to convey in his or her work. However, Kanda solved this problem by reading the story in advance before class. She preferred joining a group of her close friends who read together so that they could develop a mutual understanding and interpretation of the text together.

I always read the assigned story during the weekend with my friends who are also my house mates. I like reading together as it is easy to discuss the unclear points in the stories. Sharing and discussing ideas with friends is very useful for me. It helps me to get more understanding of the story. I prefer this method to reading alone by myself. It gave me more confidence about the interpretation of the text. Though it takes quite a long time to finish reading each story, I think it is worth reading this way.

(Kanda Interview 1)

I further asked Kanda about what she did if she still could not understand some points in the stories and Kanda told me that:

I will try to search the reviews from the internet or try to find supplementary reading from the library. However, sometimes those reviews or supplementary reading we found were also quite difficult in term of the language used. In this, way we will read it together again and if we still have some points that are unclear, we then made some notes in order to ask the teacher later on.

(Kanda Interview 1)

We can see that Kanda presented the characteristic of cooperativeness which is dominant in Thai culture. Although Kanda is a smart student, she is not a self-confident one who prefers to do everything by herself. Thus, the characteristic of cooperativeness helps her to contribute to the knowledge

building process which leads to the practice and development of critical thinking in the literature classroom. This practice may be a more effective way of reading than reading individually. We can see that Kanda's knowledge building process is different from Naree, who is a self-confident person who prefers to think by herself first before seeking assistance from her peers.

## **Written assignment before the mid-term examinations**

### **Kanda's first assignment: *The Teacher***

The first assignment for the story *The Teacher* gave Kanda a chance to apply her direct personal background knowledge and experience in answering the provided questions. The synopsis of this story has already been mentioned in the previous chapter.

In my first interview with Kanda, she gave comment on this story that

I really like this story and I like the way Ajarn Sodsai started this course with it. It is because this story is very close to us who are students of Faculty of Education and are going to be teachers in very near future. This story reminded me the time when I practised teacher training. I totally understand both the feeling of the teacher and the student as I am in both roles. This story gave me not only direct experience, but also a lesson for my future career as a teacher.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Then I further asked her about the lesson for her future career as a teacher given by the story that she mentioned. Kanda said that,

This story teaches me about the characteristics that a good teacher should have which is an understanding. After reading the story I realised that being a good teacher doesn't mean only be good in term of academic knowledge but

also in term of humanistic value. It helps me to understand about the role of a good teacher that I should take.

(Kanda Interview 1)

Kanda told me in the second interview that, when compared to other stories in this course, *The Teacher* seems to be the least complicated one. It is because she could apply her direct experience and personal background while reading the story and answering the assignment questions. However, her score from this first assignment is not high, at 15.5 out of 20. Kanda commented that although it is a less complicated story, answering the questions and interpreting the story are still difficult tasks for her.

I always have a problem with vocabulary and writing techniques used in the story. It is not only this story but also other stories in general. Sometimes I don't understand the writing techniques of the writers so I cannot interpret the message that the writer wants to convey in his story. Another problem is when I face the vocabulary with connotations of meaning which I cannot find in the dictionary. It is very difficult for a Thai student like me to understand that kind of meaning.

(Kanda Interview 2)

The following are examples of questions and answers in the assignment,

Question 1: What is the teacher's attitude when he heard that Tan Geok Peng had committed suicide? Why do you think so?

Answer to Question 1:

He pass guilt to Tan Geok Peng because he was selfish and think about himself only. that we can see from his reaction when he checked his students' essays and found that there were many grammatical mistakes that made him feel disgraced with his colleagues even though he tried to teach them over and over but it didn't work. The students still made him feel disgraced. Finally, when the student committed suicide, he still think that's her fault. He told he others that the student didn't tell him although she had already told him in her essay but he didn't mention on them.

(Kanda Assignment 1 – *The Teacher*)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda)

Kanda's answer for this question clearly proved what she said about her problem in vocabulary and interpretative skills. We can see that Kanda did not directly answer the question which asks about 'the teacher's attitude', instead she wrote about the teacher's actions after the death of Tan Geok Peng. However, it is good that she gave evidence from the story to try to support her answer.

For the fifth question, Ajarn Sodsai asked a more personal question about the student's point of view related to the story. Kanda did better in this question, gaining her highest score (4 out of 5) of the five answers. Kanda's answer is as follows:

Question 5: In your view, do you think a student can do such a tragic thing as Tan Geok Peng does in real life? Why/ Why not? Give reasons which support your answer.

Answer to Question 5:

Yes, I think so. Because at the present, there are many competition in the social that made people become selfish and doesn't care for the others. Everyone compete each other to survive and get what they want hurry-skurry. So there was no time to talk to each other and taking care of people around us. And when someone who cannot solve problem by themself such as Tan Geok Peng and she cannot talk to the others or she has no one to talk to or consult that made her lonely in the competition world. No one has time to pay attention to her and give her the suggestion, so she feel alone and finally committed suicide.

(Kanda Assignment 1 – *The Teacher*)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda)

Although there are many mistakes in her writing such as the use of tense, spelling, sentence structure, making her writing quite difficult to understand,

Kanda could still present her ideas clearly. In this question, it seems that Ajarn Sodsai would like to see how the students can apply what they learned from this story to situations in their real lives. I think Kanda obtained the highest score in the answer because she answered the questions clearly with a full understanding of problems that can happen in real life situations.

### **Kanda's short essay**

In this course, the students were assigned only one short essay. The teacher provided an extract of news from an online newspaper which is about a student who committed suicide (See Appendix I). This news directly related to the story *The Teacher*, and the students were assigned to write a short essay by employing it as a resource and as a guideline. The instruction for the essay is as follows:

Write an essay about students' committing suicide by using the above resources as your guideline. Explain whether you agree or disagree with such deed and why so.

### Here is Kanda's short essay

According to the resources about the student's suicide, in my opinion, I completely disagree with her deed because committing suicide is not a good solution for solving problem. I believe in the saying 'Every problem has its own solution.' I think when we get in troubles and cannot manage or solve them by ourselves, we should be calm and patient. We must concentrate and think about the problems considerately. First, we should think and list what is the real problem again and again then arrange them by the order of the importance. Then, when we know what our real problem is, we should try to think and solve it by ourselves first. And if we cannot do it we should talk or consult with our parents, teachers, and friends whom we trust. I believe that everyone is ready and be willing to help you.

(Kanda assignment 2 – *The Teacher*)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda)

Kanda's essay is very short, at only 144 words. However, she could state her point clearly that she did not agree with the deed of the student in the news. Moreover, she also gave clear evidence to support her idea and also gave suggestions and solution to that situation. It is noticeable that in the essay she did not apply much personal background knowledge or experience within it. What she wrote are general but practical and useful suggestions to solve every problem in life.

However, from what she wrote in the essay, we can see that she is a person who knows the pattern of how to solve life problems. I could say that Kanda also possessed the three form of criticality in Barnett's framework i.e. critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action. For critical reason, we can see in the way she can think systematically for the steps to solve the problem by suggesting what to do first, second and so on. However, this practice can also be considered as a form of critical action in the way she could plan how to solve the problems and act in the world. Critical self-reflection may be seen in the way she suggested that 'First, we should think and list what is the real problem again and again then arrange them by the order of the importance.' This is a practice of 'self-monitoring' that stated in Barnett's (1997) first level in the domain of self. The form of critical action is clearly seen in her practice of 'problem solving' that is also in Barnett's first level, in the domain of the world.

I further asked Kanda in my second interview with her about how she felt about this essay. Kanda told me that her score 6 of 10 was fine for her. However, she added that,

I am fine with this score, but I still would like to know why I got 6 instead of 5 or 7. I mean it would be much better if Ajarn Sodsai gave any comments or corrections on my writing so that I can know my points of mistake. This is the first essay in this course and I was not quite sure about how to write it. She did not correct my grammatical mistakes which I'm sure that there are plenty of them in my writings (*laugh*). If she gave any comments or correction, it would be very helpful for my later pieces of written assignment.

(Kanda Interview 2)

We can see that Kanda also commented on the same point as Naree about Ajarn Sodsai's lack of comments and feedback on students' assignments.

## Mid-term examination paper

The description of the mid-term examination paper was discussed in Chapter 5, section *Mid-term examination paper* (see p. 166). The complete mid-term examination questions were provided in Appendix K – Midterm examinations questions.

In my second interview with Kanda, I asked her whether she had any comments on the length of time for the examination and she told me that two hours is enough for the three questions that she had to answer. When compared to Naree, Kanda could write more for each answer i.e. around 200 words in average while Naree could write around 150 words, on average. However, Kanda's writings contained many grammatical mistakes which might affect the overall understanding of its content. I asked Kanda about this point and she told me that,

I think two hours is an appropriate time for three questions. However, I still felt a bit nervous while writing. I get used to using the dictionary while writing, but Ajarn Sodsai did not allow us to bring it into the room with exam. It is very difficult for me to figure out the appropriate word to write down. I know that I spent too much time thinking about the proper word to express my idea. I have an idea about what to write but I just don't know how to write it well in English. So, as you can see from my writings in the exam, the sentences seem awkward and redundant and the vocabulary is very poor. I really feel bad about it and about myself.

(Kanda Interview 2)

The following are examples of mid-term examination questions and Kanda's answer for each question,

Question 1: In *The Teacher* (by Catherine Lim), it presents an 'estranged' relationship between a teacher and a student. Describe this with your own words whether their decision at the end is wrong. (15 points)

Answer to Question 1:

I think their decision at the end is wrong. In case of the student, I think she should consider and solve her problem in another way not committed suicide. I believe that every problem can be solved unless it seems like there's no way to do with it. She should concentrate, be reasonable, and think about the consequences after her act. How do her mother, brother, and sister live? Who will help her father sell cakes? And the most important thing, who will make her dream come true? She used to want to be a nurse, succeed in her job, has a lot of money and a new house, and live happily with her mother, brother, and sister, but now she was selfish and cared only for oneself by committed suicide, leave her beloved mother, brother, and sister behind and still live with the brutal father.

Moreover, in case of the teacher who thought that everything was the student's false, I think it's not true because it could be the teacher's too. The teacher said that why she did not tell him about her problem, so he could help and stop her from committed suicide. In fact, she had told him everything in her essays, but he did not mind and understand what she wanted to tell. He only cared about her ungrammatical essays that made him was ashamed and disappointed. I think if he had recognised of this, the story would not have ended with sorrow. I think he must be more understanding that this to his students and it will not lead to the estranged relationship between him and his student like this. (246 words)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda)

According to her answer, we can see that Kanda could present her ideas in a well organised pattern. She answered the question directly by stating clearly that 'their decision at the end is wrong' and then divided the content to be in two separate points i.e. in case of the student and in case of the teacher. Moreover, she gave enough evidence from the story to support her ideas. At the end of the story she provided a succinct conclusion: 'I think he must be

more understanding that this to his students and it will not lead to the estranged relationship between him and his student like this.' However, the ideas that Kanda would like to convey in her writing were quite difficult to understand due to the grammatical mistakes mentioned earlier, and it is noticeable that Kanda's limited resources in language are a restriction to her presentation and development of critical thinking in her writing.

Other examples of Kanda's writing are presented in her answer for the second and third question in the mid-term exam,

Question 2 : In *Why, Honey?* (by Raymond Carver), there are many points in the stories which present the family bond between mother and son. What makes things go wrong or right in a family? And how this affect to their society? (15 points)

Answer to Question 2:

I think the causes that make things go wrong in this family are lacking of understanding and intimacy. Because of these, that made the mother and son were not understand in each other's act. The mother did not understand why her son was cruel and did not tell her the truth, so she only asked him for reasons of his act every times. She did not teach how he should be and give him more intimacy. She just took care him about the food by preparing his meals everyday and let him grew up and spend his life with his own thought. And the more time passed, the more intimacy has extend. The son was not close to his mother. He loved his mother and did not want to hurt her, so he decided to lie to her. He tried to show his love by preparing dinner for her because he thought that was the only way to show it. (160 words)

Question 3: In *Cricket* (by Robert Olen Butler) and *A Family Supper* (by Kazuo Ishiguro), the father–son relationship is clearly represented. What are the similarities and/or differences of the fathers and sons in both stories? (15 points)

Answer to Question 3:

I think the similarities of them are the estranged relationship between the father and son and thinkable when it's late of the fathers. The relationship

between the father and son the two stories were estranged. They did not close to each other unless they were same sex, but they were close to the women, the mother and the sister. In *Crickets*, the father cannot attract his son's interest successfully, and in *A Family Supper*, the father cannot speak directly to his son. The main reason of them is lacking of intimacy between father and son. Moreover, both fathers are thinkable when it was too late because their sons were grown up and have their own ideas.

In *Crickets*, if the father had wanted his son proud in Vietnamese and be partiotism like him, I think he should have taught him since he was born or was a baby because now his son is ten years old. He has his own thoughts that are he is an American and America is his home. And in *A Family Supper*, the father tried to invite and persuade his son to live with in Japan, and he think that he should be more kind, take more time with the family, and give more love and intimacy to his son. And I think the differences of them are the age of their son and the method of persuasion. In *Crickets*, the son was only ten years old, but in *A Family Supper*, the son had already grown up and his age may be more than 25 years old. Moreover, the method of persuasion, In *Crickets* the father use both words and acts to persuade and teach his son, but in *A Family Supper*, the father use only words and let his son think by himself. (301 words)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

From the two examples above, we can see that Kanda is a student with ideas. She could directly answer each question asked by the teacher as we can see in the first sentence of each piece of writing. However, Kanda's main problem is her limited use of English in term of sentence structure, word choice, spelling, subject-verb agreement and the use of tense. All these limitations in language lead to limitation in her writing skills and the presentation of idea. Despite being a Thai teacher who well understands the difference between English and Thai grammar and sentence patterns, I too have difficulty in comprehending the idea that she wants to convey in her answer. Ajarn Sodsai herself might have the same difficulties as me, but I do not know since she did not leave any comments or feedback at all on Kanda's work.

## Kanda's assignments before the final exam

The characteristics of assignments before the final examination were already provided in Chapter 5, section *Written assignments before the final examination* (see p. 167).

### Kanda's seventh assignment: A Farmer and his Wife

The followings are example of questions and answers in the seventh assignment, *A Farmer and His Wife*:

Question 1: What kind of life do the farmer and his wife have and how do they cope with it?

Answer to Question 1:

They have the simple and hardship life on their own land where inherited from the ancestor by doing farm. Although they have 4 children, they live with no child because of the social changing. Their children run away to the civilized city when they got what they want and leave their parent behind.

The farmer and his wife live in the fast changing world which is different from their children's world. Many thinks around them have changed, but they still spend their won life in their own way. They cope with that kind life by doing their farm over and over for many year with the hope that one day their children will come back and live with them.

And,

Question 2: Despite all difficulties, what makes the farmer and his wife continue to stay on their land? Is it powerful enough for them to do so?

Answer to Question 2:

I think the love makes the farmer and his wife continue to stay on their land despite all difficulties. The love in their children, their land, and importantly the career, farmer, makes them keep on their living. They want to give their land that is the only one property which inherited from generations to generations to their children and want them to keep on their love career,

farmer that is the main job to provide for the family for long time ago. Not only the love but also the hope that make them still live in their land. They hope that one day their children will come back with the grandchildren and live with them in their own land by doing the farm. According to the reasons above I think it's powerful enough for them to do so.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

Although Ajarn Sodsai did not provide the follow-up questions that need the use of critical thinking to answer them, we can see that Kanda could well express her critical thinking. She tried to give evidence and examples from the story to support her answer. Thus, it seems that after the first half of the semester, Kanda had learned how to practise critical thinking in her writing.

### **Practice of critical thinking and the use of background knowledge**

Kanda's practice of critical thinking and the use of background knowledge can be seen in her assignments before the final examination. For example, the eighth assignment, *Crickets*:

Question 2: If the narrator really participated in such a war, would this affect on his relationship with his son? And did it involve the title *Crickets*? Explain this with your own words.

#### Answer to Question 2:

If he really participated in a war, I think it would affect on the relationship because if he really joined, he would be more patriotism and he would expect his son to be like him more than now. It involved the title *Crickets* because the narrator compared the South army as fire crickets and the North army as charcoal cricket because the South army has less powerful than the North army but they still fight for their homeland.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

We can see that Kanda used her background knowledge about the Vietnam War in her answer, although the story itself did not make a clear comparison of each type of cricket to the North and South army. This is probably the reason she had a high score of 4 out of 5 for this answer, despite its short length.

Another example is apparently presented in the ninth assignment, *Akueke*,

Question 5: In your country, can any woman be treated like Akueke? Why/ Why not? Give reasons which support your answer.

Answer to Question 5:

Yes, she can because some groups of people in the countryside of Thailand have still believed in superstitious and spiritualism as we have seen from the news about the ceremonies of spirit driving out. However, it is not acceptable by law. Thailand has the laws that protect human's right from unfair action which is different from the situation of Akueke in the story.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

Kanda was awarded 3 out of 5 from this, her highest mark in the assignment. In this question, It is clear Kanda could apply her personal background knowledge of Thai culture in her answer in describing Thai belief about spirit and superstition. Moreover, she could give examples from the news to support her answer and also make a comparison between what happens in Thai society and African society in the story, as she wrote that 'Thailand has the laws that protect human's right from unfair action which is different from the situation of Akueke in the story'. This reveals that in this question Kanda could apply critical thinking by giving reasons and applying background knowledge in her answer.

Another clear example can be seen in Question 5 of the twelfth story, *The Boarding House*:

**Question 5:** It can be said that Joyce's The Boarding House shows a 'peculiar' human relationship, especially between a mother and daughter, or a man and a woman. Describe one of these and give examples to support your answer.

**Answer to Question 5:**

I think the relationship between a mother and daughter is peculiar because normally the mother and daughter always close to each other and talk to each other everything, but in this story the mother and daughter become estranged and act to each other like the commander and the follower because the daughter has to do everything follows her mother's words.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

The above question was more complicated than other questions as it asks about human relationships presented in the story. It seems that the students need to apply their background knowledge in answering the question. This time, Kanda's answer is rather brief. She could answer all the points asked in the questions but in a brief way. She did not write descriptively to provide more illustrations of her idea and neither presented any personal ideas in her answer. Thus from this question, the last assignment question from the last story in this course, it is difficult to conclude as I did with Naree that critical thinking and personal idea developed well throughout the semester. This aspect of Kanda's development of critical thinking will be discussed later in the last section of this chapter.

### **Kanda's understanding of literary knowledge**

In the assignments before the final examination, it appears that Ajarn Sodsai did not provide questions that asked directly for the application of literary knowledge from the students. Clear examples of her questions can be seen in two assignments, *Crickets* and *Mabel*. In the eighth assignment, *Crickets*, Kanda could present her understanding of literary knowledge by answering

the following question which asked about the conflict of the characters in the story:

Question 2: Is there any conflicts between the narrator and his son? Give reasons from the story to support your answers.

Answer to Question 2:

Yes, there is. Because they has different thought, belief, life style and interest which caused from their different childhood background.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

In this question, Kanda's answer was short and she did not give enough evidence from the story to support her answer as asked in the questions. However, we can see that Kanda had literary knowledge as she understood the meaning of the literary term 'conflict' and gave the correct answer to the question.

More examples can be seen in the tenth assignment, *Mabel*. Kanda could further represent not only her good development in critical thinking but her understanding of literary knowledge about the word 'irony', as mentioned in the following excerpt:

Question 4: Before the secretary of the club starts to tell the story of George and Mabel to the author, he watches George disappear into the club with 'the smile of not unkindly irony.' Why? What is the irony of George and Mabel in this story?

Answer to Question 4: Because the secretary has a pity on George's expression when he asked about his wife. The secretary show his sarcastic smile toward George's reaction that as if he will die without her, despite many years ago, he told the secretary the story about marriage escaping which show that he didn't want to marry. But now when the times've passed and his wife went for holidays, he act like he love, miss and cannot be without his wife. And the explanation above is the irony of George and Mabel in this story.

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

From these two examples, we can see that Kanda could not only present her understanding of literary knowledge, but she also reached the first level i.e. discipline-specific critical thinking skills in the domain of formal knowledge proposed by Barnett (1997).

However, we can see that Kanda's English language in this writing was still problematic. Although Kanda wrote more than for previous questions, she still made many mistakes in spelling, subject-verb some way affect overall understanding of the message she wanted to convey. Although Ajarn Sodsai seldom provided comments or feedback on students' writing, this time she even circled some grammatical mistakes and wrote corrections. This is probably because Ajarn Sodsai had enough time to correct the mistakes or because those mistakes were so serious that she could not overlook them.

## Final examination paper

The description of the final examination paper was discussed in Chapter 5, section *Final examination paper* (see p. 171). The complete final examination questions were provided in Appendix L –*Final examination questions*.

It appears that the average length of Kanda's answers is shorter than in the mid-term examination. Her writing contains many grammatical errors and run-on sentences, but she could present precise critical ideas in her answers and also gave specific evidence to support what she wrote. Examples may be seen in her answer to the second question in the final examination:

**Question 2:** According to *The Boarding House*, do you think Mrs Mooney do the right thing to her daughter, Polly? Why so? In your view, is Polly satisfied with the way she has been raised?

Answer to Question 2:

According to *The Boarding House*, I don't think Mrs Mooney does the right thing to her daughter, Polly. I totally disagree with the way she take care of her children and especially the way she tricky find a man for Polly. Seems like there is no essential love and care in term of Mrs Mooney as a mother. Although, she might try to do everything for Polly, but it is not in the right and ordinary way. At the end, Mrs Mooney might succeed in trying to up raise a standard of Polly's living. But in the future, the things she did might harmful to Polly's married life. It's because there's no love between Polly and Mr Doran, there are just only passion, seducing, ashamed and responsibility. In my opinion, it is possible that Polly might satisfied with getting married with Mr Doran, but she might not satisfied with all the way she has been raised by her mother. It's surely that she is interesting in Mr Doran. But it is ambiguously that she is happy with life or not. (178 words)

(Note: All English errors are originally made by Kanda.)

In this answer, Kanda could present her viewpoint clearly in her answer. She wrote directly that she disagreed with the action of the main character and also gave specific details from the story to support her idea. Moreover, in the last two sentences, she practised critical reason in the way she presented her idea sceptically.

During the second interview, I asked Kanda about her view of the final examination. Kanda told me that she did not feel happy with it, especially the number of questions to be answered in the time. Kanda said:

I think two hours is too short to finish all five questions. It is very difficult to do so. In the mid-term examination, Ajarn Sodsai gave us two hours to do the three questions. But, for this time, we got the same two hour period to finish five questions. It was very stressful for me to finish all questions in time and the I think the questions for final examination were more complicated than the mid-term. I tried my best for this example but I think I couldn't do it as well as I expected. I never do things well in such a limited time like that. I thought I could do the mid-term examination better than this.

Kanda's answer to Question 5 provides evidence for what she said about her feelings in the interview above. She wrote a succinct answer of just 120 words. There were many grammatical mistakes in her writing and it seemed she did not provide many critical ideas in this answer:

Question 5: What have you got from studying this course, especially in terms of 'human nature'? Answer this by giving some examples from the stories you learned.

Answer to Question 5:

I've learned human nature from the story *Mabel* that talk about the love between a man and a woman. At first the man who engage with the woman for many year decided to marry with his fiancé, but suddenly he decided to escape her every possible way. The woman try every possible way too for marrying with him until she did it successfully. Many years after their married, the woman go for holiday and the man said that he feel like a lose way dog. For this could learn that people will not know that what is a value for them whenever it is near them, but they will think of and were aware of it when it's gone. (120 words)

From the two excerpts provided, we can see that the average length of Kanda's answers in the final examination is shorter than in the mid-term examination at approximately 150 words compared to 200 words, and significantly different. In her answer for final exam, the longest answer, that for Question 2, consists of 176 words while the longest in the mid-term examination consisted of 301 words. It seems that Kanda could not present her ideas in a critical way as well as she did in the mid-term examination.

This is probably due to stress caused by the limited time, as she told me in the second interview. In general, Kanda was not a self-confident person who could express her idea instantaneously, so such a limited time at an important event like the final examination would put her under great pressure and it directly affect the presentation of her ideas, the quality and also the extent of

her writing. Thus, we can see that the duration of the examination is probably another important and influential factor in Kanda's criticality development.

## **Second interview with Kanda**

The second interview with Kanda was carried out by the same method as Naree's which was already discussed in Chapter 6, section *Second Interview with Naree*, p. 211).

### **Teaching methods**

When asked about her feelings about Ajarn Sodsai's teaching methods throughout the semester, Kanda said that,

I like her teaching methods. She is a very encouraging and supportive teacher especially in the way always asked open-ended questions in class. This kind of questions pushed us to think more and more. She is a very active teacher as well so the students had to be alert while attending her class. For me, I always sit at the first row and I had to be alert all the time as she always made eye contact with me. I think this way helped me to keep attending to and thinking about what she said or else I would miss some points and could not follow up what she was saying. Studying with her is fun. She is a good story telling. She always gave us the very clear and vivid examples. I also like the way she told us about her personal experiences in relation to the stories we were studying. It helped me to see the picture more clearly with more understanding. When I could understand the story well, I then could analyse or interpret the story better.

(Naree Interview 2)

Furthermore, I asked her about the way Ajarn Sodsai used both English and Thai throughout this course. Kanda commented that,

It is very good that she tried to use English most of the time in class. It helped me to practise my listening skills as well as speaking skills even though I rarely used English to answer her questions in class. However, the way she sometimes used Thai with us is very good as well. I think she used Thai in smaller proportion when compared to English and this is a good practice. She always used Thai when the topics were too difficult for us to understand. This helped me in a great deal with my understanding in the story. This course is not an easy one. If she used English in class all the time, it would be very difficult for Thai students like us to understand the stories.

(Kanda Interview 2)

## **Teaching materials**

The next topic I asked Kanda about was the teaching material for this class. I asked Kanda about her feelings about the 11 stories that she studied throughout the semester.

In my opinion, Ajarn Sodsai started the story with the easiest one and moved to the most difficult one. The first story *The Teacher* is very close to our lives and personal experience as students in Faculty of Education. It is easy to understand. Later on, each story began to be more and more complicated. I feel like she wanted to teach us gradually about the pattern of life.

(Naree Interview 2)

In this course, Ajarn Sodsai provided the definition of some difficult vocabulary in the stories to the students. So, I asked Kanda whether it was a good idea to provide such definition to students or not and Kanda said that,

Providing definitions of difficult vocabulary in the story is very helpful for us. Reading difficult and complicated stories discourages me that much. So, I do not want to be discouraged even more by wasting time searching for meaning of number of words in the dictionary. She is very kind and understanding in providing this for her students.

(Kanda Interview 2)

## Assignments and examinations

The next interview topic is about assignments and examinations provided in this course. I asked Kanda about how she felt about how all assignments and examinations were in the form of long, written answers instead of the multiple choice format provided by teachers in other courses. Kanda commented that:

To tell you the truth, in general, I prefer the multiple choice examination to the writing one. However, in this course I think it is suitable that all assignments and examinations are in form of writing rather than multiple choices. This course needs more critical ideas to answer questions. Ajarn Sodsai's questions are always open and flexible. The students could answer in any way they want, but they have to give enough evidence to support their answer. Written examination provides me with more chances to answer the questions with my personal ideas. It is more practical for this course than the multiple choice questions.

I further asked Kanda for her opinion about Ajarn Sodsai's feedback and comment on students' assignment and examination. Kanda told me that:

Ajarn Sodsai seldom gave feedback or comments on students' writings. However, she always gave overall comments for the writing in class. She explained some difficult questions and gave examples of the correct way to answer. I think this is good enough as I know that she is very busy and has to take responsibility for many classes. By the way, if possible, I still want some feedback or comments from her as it would help me in a great deal for the development of my writing skills as you could see that it appears very poor in my assignments and examination. Apart from that, the feedback and comments would also help me about the development of my ideas and also language. Sometimes, I was not sure about what I wrote in my writings. I do not know whether what I wrote was right or wrong. The common comments that she did in class was good, but the individual feedback for each student would be the best.

(Kanda Interview 2)

## Kanda's attitudes and perceptions of the course

The last part of the second interview was about the student's perception of this course, and Kanda made a thoughtful comment:

I like this course as it enables me to think more. In general I like reading but I just read for pleasure, but never think profoundly of myself a 'why' or 'why not' question. However, after studying this course, I start to think more and ask myself more questions. I found out that it is interesting to do so. Reading with close friends is also interesting and useful for me as it helps me when I cannot think alone. However, sometimes I found out that it is not easy to analyse or interpret the story even when I read together with friends. ... It is because of the different personal background that the character and I have. For example, in the story *Sredni Vashtar* which the boy in the story hated his aunt very much, I do not understand his feeling that much as I never hate anyone in that way. But, for a story like *Mabel* which is about love, I did not have any difficulties in understand or interpret it as I can share the same love experience with the character. This teaches me to understand more about life. From reading various kinds of stories in this course, I realised that there are many forms of life which I have to face in the near future when I step out from this academic world. I consider this course as preparation lesson for life.

(Kanda Interview 2)

I further asked Kanda to give examples of the way she applied the knowledge or thinking skills she learned from this course to her life. Kanda said that:

For example, now when I watch soap opera on TV, I started to ask myself more questions about the characters, the setting, the plot and so on which I never do so before this. In the past when I watched any soap opera, I just watched it for fun and get myself involved with what the actors or actresses did. I just felt hate, love or disgusted with some characters without asking the myself why that character did that way and why not other ways. But, now, I started to understand the feeling or action of the characters. I understand more about human nature and also more of my life. I learn to accept the truth and nature of life.

(Kanda Interview 2)

I asked Kanda for her views about her own development of criticality throughout the semester after finishing this course. Kanda said that:

I think it has been developed quite well as I started to think more about things around me not only when I read books but also when watch things on TV as I told you earlier or when I meet people around me. You know, my most favourite story in this course is *The Teacher* as it really applicable to my career. What I learned from this story is that I should not ignore any little thing around me especially when that thing is related to my students. I do not want to be a teacher who faced the tragic story of my student without giving my hand to help her like the teacher in that story.

(Kanda Interview 2)

From the interview, we can see that Kanda could reach all three domains of Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality i.e. the domain of knowledge, the self and the world in the way she said that 'I started to understand the feeling or action of the characters. I understand more about human nature and also more of my life. I learn to accept the truth and nature of life.' From what she said it reveals that Kanda could reach the first two levels in the domain of knowledge as she attained discipline-specific critical thinking skills and could also perform reflection on her own understanding toward real life situation. Additionally, we can see that Kanda could reach Level Two of the third domain in the form of critical action. She performed a 'reflective practice' from what she studied in class to her career as a teacher when she said that 'I do not want to be a teacher who faced the tragic story of my student without giving my hand to help her like the teacher in that story'.

## **Kanda's criticality development over the semester**

Kanda's criticality development over the semester can be analysed regarding its relationship to Barnett's (1997) and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) framework for criticality together with Carter and Long (1991)'s literature teaching models.

## **Perception and practice**

Kanda's perception and practice of criticality develops well throughout the semester. According to the two interviews with her, it is clear that Kanda had understood the meaning of critical thinking since the beginning of the semester. It is clear that Kanda could reach the first and second levels of the two domains of criticality proposed by Barnett (1997) in the way she could apply the critical thinking that she practised in the literature class to her life when she faced situations similar to those in the stories. The evidence is clearly discussed and presented in the first interview on pp. 235-236. Kanda's criticality development in the third domain i.e. the world in form of critical action is not clearly witnessed during the semester as it is difficult to see her actual critical action in the limited time and space of a classroom or interviews. However, this does not mean that Kanda could not practise critical action. From the interviews with her, I could see her intention to perform critical action in her future life. However, those critical actions cannot be actually witnessed in the limited time of the field work.

Kanda's perception and understanding of the significance of critical thinking developed well over the semester. In her first interview, Kanda realised that critical thinking is significant not only in the literature subjects but also in other subjects. However, she admitted that literature is the course that required critical thinking the most and her critical thinking has been developed well during studying literature courses. Critical thinking is also useful in other courses i.e. *Advanced Reading 1* as it enabled her to think critically in selecting and designing suitable reading strategies for the age of the students (see pp. 238-239).

At the end of the semester, it is clear that Kanda's perception and practice of criticality had developed well. In her second interview, she revealed that the literature course enabled her to think profoundly and ask more questions of herself. She also learned to how to think critically by reading together with friends which encouraged her to be more confident in her ideas and

interpretation. In her second interview, Kanda presented the further development of her criticality in all three domains as she said that reading various kinds of stories in this literature course taught her to understand more about life. For her, this course was a preparation which enabled her to realise that there are many forms of life which she had to face in the word outside the academic realm. She started to think more critically about things, people and situations around her (see pp. 264-265).

From what she said we can see that Kanda could not only reach the domain of formal knowledge in the form of critical reason from literature study, but also the other two domains i.e. the self and the world by reflecting on her formal knowledge and preparing for problem-solving in her life in the future. At the end of the semester, Kanda had a clearer perception of criticality. It is clear that the stories she studied in the literature course prepared her to face various forms of life when she graduated. This made her realise the significance of the literature course as she considered it as a preparation lesson for her life in the future.

Apart from the interviews, during the semester Kanda also demonstrated criticality development in the three domains through her assignments and examination papers by giving enough evidence and examples from the story to support her ideas. Although she did not do this in every piece of her writing, it is sufficient enough to see her practice and understanding of critical thinking. A clear example can be seen in Kanda's short essay assigned for the story, *The Teacher*, provided with detailed discussion in the section *Kanda's short essay* (see pp.247).

Kanda's practice in the classroom was also related to some intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999). Regarding the first resource i.e. *background knowledge*, Kanda along with other students in her class had a good chance to develop their cultural background knowledge through the teaching approach of Ajarn Sodsai. The practice of Ajarn Sodsai in usually providing personal experience, clear and

vivid explanations in classes (like the description of autumn discussed in the previous chapter) led Kanda to deepen her background knowledge in a specific context which related closely to the degree to which she can think critically about the literary text. Another intellectual resource that Kanda could develop was *possession of critical concepts* which Bailin *et al.* defined as 'the ability to identify and make appropriate distinctions of some particular concepts such as definition, implication, argument and so on'(p. 290). The evidence can be seen in the way she could make implications while reading the first story, *The Teacher*. Although the author did not write directly about the financial status of the main character's family, Kanda can make a good implication about it by not only telling Ajarn Sodsai that this family was very poor, but also giving clear evidence from the story to support her answer (see pp. 227-228). Further evidence can be seen in her answers for questions in the stories *Cricket* and *Mabel* which require the students to discuss the use of literary devices such as conflict and irony. From her answers, it is clear that Kanda could demonstrate useful critical concepts in distinguishing metaphorical and literal language in her answers productively (see p. 257).

Kanda also possessed other intellectual resources i.e. certain habits of mind and knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically which emphasises 'the procedures to make definition or to make a discussion on a particular issue with others' (Bailin *et al.*, 1999 p. 290). In her first interview, Kanda said that she found it was very helpful to think and discuss with friends as it provided her with more confidence and ideas than thinking alone. It also helped her make sure that what she thought and answered to class was not foolish (see pp. 232-233)

From the interview, we can see that Kanda is a student who had attitudes or habits of mind predisposing her to think critically. However, as mentioned earlier, she preferred not to participate in class unless called by the teacher. Her habits of mind in thinking critically cannot be developed well due to her own personal characteristics as she admitted in the first interview that she was not a self-confident person. Being a teacher trainee for a semester had

not helped her to feel less excited and nervous whenever she had to speak in public. Kanda preferred not to volunteer to answer Ajarn Sodsai's questions as she knew that finally the teacher would call anyone to answer it (see p.229).

Apart from her lack of confidence, language ability is also another factor which affected her habits of mind to think critically. This topic will be discussed thoroughly in the following section, *Language and ideas*.

### **Language and ideas**

In my view, Kanda did not significantly develop in language especially in terms of her writing and speaking skills. From her assignments and examination papers, it is noticeable that Kanda had some difficulties in the use of English in term of grammatical structure, word choices, sentence structure, vocabulary, spelling and so on (see pp. 250-254). All these limitations to a greater or lesser extent lead to difficulties in conveying Kanda's critical ideas. Additionally, her pieces of writing are generally short. She did not give much vivid evidence or examples from the story to support her ideas, so it is quite difficult to investigate the development of critical ideas in her writing. Kanda had the same kinds of problems in her writing throughout the semester. This is probably because the focus of this course is not on writing skills of the students but on the understanding and development of their ideas in literary interpretation. Thus, the teacher did not give a great deal of attention to the correction of language errors or give individual feedback. However, there was a chance for Kanda to practise and develop this skill by herself on other English courses that she took in that semester.

Besides her writing skills, her speaking skills failed to develop significantly throughout the semester. Although Kanda could speak English well, she did not like to speak much in class. Kanda had a chance to develop her speaking skills and use of English verbally, but it seems that she did not take the opportunity. This is probably due to her personality, as she is not a talkative

person. In class, when Kanda answered Ajarn Sodsai's questions or had discussion with her, she always spoke in short and simple sentences. During the observation, it appeared that Kanda did not have confidence in her speaking skills, although I could see that she knew how to use grammatically correct sentences. Evidence on how her limited language ability affects her habits of mind to think critically can be seen from her first interview as she said that it was difficult for her to communicate ideas in English, and she often did not know the proper word to use. She further stated that she always thought in Thai before answering the questions. However, whenever she had to utter it in English, it seemed that her head was blank; all ideas and answers disappeared. Finding a right word that can precisely express her ideas and opinion was always difficult for her (see p. 241). In class I noticed that when speaking or answering questions in Thai Kanda appeared more relaxed and confident. The evidence may be seen in her two interviews in Thai with me and her conversation with Ajarn Sodsai at the fourth classroom observation (see p. 230). By speaking Thai, Kanda could express more ideas and did so fluently and critically without apparently feeling awkward or reluctant, as when speaking in English.

In her interviews it appears that Kanda's criticality development was present in the three domains. However, in classroom practice, it reveals that Kanda may not extensively connect to the domain of self as proposed by Barnett as she did not like to take action in class. However, it is clear that the quality of her ideas developed well. This development was due to the teaching methods and personal characteristics of Ajarn Sodsai that encouraged critical thinking from the students by asking questions and encouraging an atmosphere supporting critical thinking in the classroom. Kanda is a student of ideas who preferred to think by herself. Although she did not like to answer the questions voluntarily, whenever she was called to answer or participate in the discussion topics, she did it attentively. She did not feel uncomfortable with the teacher at all. Clear evidence can be seen in section *Kanda's participation in class* (see pp. 227).

However, as mentioned earlier, Kanda was not willing to speak much in class especially in English, preferring Thai. Aside from her shyness, another reason is probably class size. This class consisted of 40 students so there was not enough time for the teacher to encourage or wait for students, especially the shy ones, to talk or express their ideas. Thus, we can see that Kanda had difficulties expressing her ideas critically in English and especially in limited time (see p. 242). It is clear that the limitation of time and language resource affects Kanda's criticality development in English literature classroom.

### **Length of writing**

Kanda did not clearly present criticality development in her writing. Moreover, the length of her writing in assignments and examination papers was short, on average, so it is rather difficult to see any development of her critical thinking.

However, in terms of the mid-term and final examination papers, the length of her writing is notably different. In her mid-term exam, Kanda wrote rather long answers of approximately 200 words on average than in the final exam, when her average answers were significantly shorter at approximately 150 words. In the mid-term examination, Kanda could present her ideas in a well organised pattern. She could give reasons and evidence to support her answer well (see pp.250-253). However, in the final examination, it is apparent that Kanda could not write as well as she did in the mid-term exam (see pp. 259-260). In her second interview, Kanda commented that the provided two hours in the final examination was too short to complete the five questions. It was very stressful for her to finish all the questions, which she considered more complicated than those in the midterm examination. She admitted that she never did things well in a limited time (see p. 259). We can see that Kanda experienced great pressure from the limited time of the examination. She had to complete five questions within two hours whereas, in the mid-term exam, there were only three questions assigned to that same length of time. This is

one reason why Kanda could not express her critical thinking extensively in her writings.

Despite the generally short length of her answers, Kanda tried her best to give evidence and examples from the story to support her idea. However, it seems that they did not contain much description as, unlike Naree, Kanda always wrote short sentences without the application of examples from her real life experience to support her answers for the assignments (see p. 257). Thus, I could not trace any significant development of her critical thinking in her writing. However, in my view, this does not mean that her critical thinking could not be developed through the writings; perhaps with more time it would have been developed well.

We can see that the length of answer, language, and length of time are important for criticality development particularly in students' writing. The reason is that, apart from the five resources necessary to accomplish critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999), language is an important resource for the development of critical thinking. The example may be clearly seen in the case of Kanda. As mentioned earlier that Kanda is a thinking student with ideas, not a student of action. It is clearly seen from the classroom observation that she is not a self-confident person, and we can see that she always needed peers' assistance to develop her ideas in class. Thus, it is difficult for her to express her ideas critically within the limits of time experienced in a final examination.

## **Participation**

From the beginning of the semester, Kanda was not a student who was assertive or outstanding in class. She was always silent, submissive, but attentive. These characteristics of Kanda are typical of Thai students. Kanda did not present significant development in term of classroom participation. Although she was an attentive student who always came to class on time and was never absent in any class, she always sat silently and did not participate

in classroom activity until she was called upon to do so by the teacher. However, whenever she was called to answer or discuss any topics she could do it well. This was clearly seen from the second classroom observation when she answered Ajarn Sodsai's questions. Kanda's answers were clear, thoughtful and interesting (see pp. 227-228). It seemed that she preferred sitting and thinking silently with herself rather than trying to participate in class activities provided by the teacher.

However, it is noticeable that whenever Kanda answered or discussed any topics given by the teacher; she could do it more confidently when she had a prior discussion with friends. Many times that Kanda talked to her friends shortly before answering the questions or responding to the discussion topics provided in class. After a discussion, Kanda seemed more confident with her answers and ideas (see pp. 231-232). Thus it seems that peer assistance is influential in Kanda's participation in class as it encouraged her to be more confident in her ideas and more enthusiastic to participate.

### **Kanda's response to the literature teaching approaches**

There is a relationship between the data for Kanda and the three literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991): the cultural model, the personal growth model and the language-based model.

Regarding the cultural model, Kanda responded well to Ajarn Sodsai's teaching approaches in providing clear explanations for the specific cultural context in the literary text which is unfamiliar to the students (see pp. 139-140). Evidence can be seen in her second interview where Kanda admitted she could gain more understanding of the different culture presented in the literary text. The better understanding of cultural aspects also enabled her to analyse or interpret the story in a more productive way (see pp. 261-262).

Regarding the personal growth model which is closely related to reader-response theory, Kanda's criticality development in term of personal growth

and personal response cannot be witnessed clearly. This is primarily according to her personality which is reserved, timid and silent. Generally, Kanda did not prefer to present much of her personal background and experience either in the interviews or writings. Thus, her criticality development in term of personal growth and personal response cannot be witnessed clearly from the data.

Regarding the language-based model, it is clear that Kanda did not have much experience of this literature teaching model. This is because the teacher put more focus on the personal growth as well as the cultural models rather than the language ability of the students. During the semester, she did not have enough chances to practise and develop her language ability due to many factors such as the large class size, the lack of immediate feedback and comments from the teacher.

## **Conclusions**

It is apparent that Kanda's criticality developed well throughout the semester in terms of her ideas, perceptions and practice as demonstrated clearly in her interviews together with her writing and practice in the classroom. However, language and length of writing did not develop significantly. This is probably due to the short period of time. One semester is not enough to solve her language difficulties. Apart from that, another aspect that did not apparently develop throughout the semester is her participation in class. In my opinion, this aspect is not easy to develop as it is grounded in to her personal characteristics. She is not a talkative, enthusiastic or outstanding person in class.

Here, I will highlight difference between the two students discussed, Naree and Kanda. From the data analysis, it is clear that the different personal characteristics of the two students made a difference in their criticality development. In class, Kanda is more reserved, silent and submissive than Naree who is always outgoing, talkative and self-confident. Naree's personal

characteristics were supportive for her criticality development as they enabled her to willingly express her ideas and opinion both in class and in the interviews. This practice of Naree provided me with more chances to see her criticality development throughout the semester.

It is clear that she could relate more to the literature teaching models, particularly to the reader-response theory, than Kanda. Not only in the interviews, but also in her written assignments and examination papers, Naree could relate her personal background and experience to the stories and create her own interpretation of what she read. However, in the case of Kanda, she was less talkative and expressive than Naree in class. Unless called on by the teacher, Kanda did not willingly to participate in class discussion or answer the teacher's question. She also did not relate much of her personal experience or background to her written assignments and examination paper in the same way as Naree, so there was not much clear evidence for me to see her response to the personal growth model or reader-response theory. It is only in the interviews that I could see her practice of criticality development more clearly. However, the fact that she did not participate in class or did not express her personal experience in her writings does not mean that Kanda could not think or could not practise her criticality at all.

Despite some differences in their personal characteristics, overwhelmingly Naree and Kanda are similar because they experienced the same educational background features such as large class size, and teacher-centred classrooms. Additionally, both of them were influenced by the same cultural background which nurtured them to possess certain cultural characteristics like kreang jai, saving face, and respect for seniority which somewhat affected their criticality development as previously discussed in Chapter 3 (see pp. 73-80). In my view, Kanda needed more support and encouragement from the teacher in order to be more self-confident and willingly to practise her criticality development.

In the same way as Naree, the development of Kanda's criticality in the three domains proposed by Barnett could be accomplished through the integration with each other particularly through the application of effective teaching approaches from the teacher. The detailed discussion of this development is provided in Chapter 8, in the section *Naree and Kanda's criticality development over the semester* (see pp. 291).

In the next chapter, I will present the cross-case analysis and issues emerging from analysis of the cases presented in the thesis.

# **Chapter 8**

## **Cross-case Analysis**

### **Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the research questions in the light of the data analysis in the previous three chapters as well as draw out issues emerging from the data analysis of the cases presented in the thesis. The chapter is divided into three main sections according to the three main research questions:

1. How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature class?
2. How is criticality perceived by
  - a) teachers ,and
  - b) students in an English literature class?
3. What is the nature of criticality development in students?
  - a) How is the criticality of the students developed?
  - b) What role do the teachers play in fostering students' criticality?
  - c) What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development?

The first section addresses research question 1. It discusses the application of two main theoretical frameworks: Barnett's (1997) model of criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources framework to the data, together with constructive comments and suggestions about how each framework could be amended. The second section of the chapter related the data to

research question 2 which concerns perceptions and conceptualisation of teacher and students in an English literature class. The third section addresses research question 3 and its following three sub-questions. This section relates the data to the literature teaching approaches in Chapter 2 and their relationship to criticality development. It will discuss the three literature teaching models related to students' criticality development: the cultural model, the personal growth model and the language model and also other influential factors that affect such development.

## **Research question 1: How can criticality be conceptualised in a literature class?**

Regarding research question 1, it is clear that Barnett and Bailin *et al.* were useful frameworks for conceptualising the criticality development of students in the literature classroom. However, they still present some limitations which require amendments and modification, as mentioned, to be more applicable and practical to educational contexts in general. Thus, I will now comment on further aspects of application of the frameworks provided by Barnett (1997) and Bailin *et al.* (1999) and I will also critique the frameworks in the light of the data analysis.

### **Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality**

#### **Domains**

In term of domains, Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality is helpful and applicable to the criticality development of students in the literature classroom in the study. Ajarn Sodsai expected the students to reach across the three domains (i.e. knowledge, self and the world), and it appeared that her expectations were met. Naree and Kanda could work across the three

domains especially with the encouragement from the teaching methods and the teacher's personal characteristics. The formal assignments and activities provided by the teacher also enabled the students' development of criticality across the domain to some extent (see pp. 160-172). It is clear that the students could make links across the three domains in the way they could practise the knowledge achieved in the literature classroom and reflect it to their life (see pp. 185-188 and pp. 234-236). Additionally, although they still required some resources for the full development of their criticality, we can see that they were capable enough of reaching the third domain (i.e. the critical action) and their development was an ongoing process. Their development was seen throughout the semester in the way they could not only practise the critical knowledge from the literature classroom in form of critical self-reflection, but also perform a critical action in real situations outside the classroom, as presented in their interviews (see pp.187-188 and pp.235-236)

### **Levels**

Although Ajarn Sodsai expected her students to be critical beings by reaching across all three domains of Barnett's framework, it is clear that the students themselves still had restricted levels of criticality. They reached just Level One and Two in each domain. This means that Naree and Kanda possessed critical thinking skills and could reflect on their own understanding in the form of self-reflection and problem-solving. However, from the data analysis, there is no evidence that they were working higher than these two levels (see p. 184 and 235). As undergraduates, it might be too abstract and too difficult for them to perform the 'refashioning of traditions' and 'transformatory critiques' (Barnett, 1997, p. 107) which are at Level Three and Four respectively. This is probably due to their being neither mature nor powerful enough to perform such actions, their being ill-equipped linguistically to express their criticality as effectively as they might, or having insufficient resources to accomplish critical thinking and reach the higher levels in Barnett's framework. All these reasons hindered them from 'refashioning' any traditions, or changing completely the

appearance or character of anything. They performed at a basic level of criticality.

However, this does not mean that they did not have any aspirations or ambitions to reach higher levels. The way they could not express their critical ideas well in the English literature class or in their writing assignments, did not mean that they did not possess criticality. Rather, it was because their language ability was limited. When talking or expressing ideas in Thai, they were more confident in their ideas and could express more of their criticality although at the two early levels of the framework (see pp.178-180 and 231-232). In my interviews with them, both Naree and Kanda expressed their eagerness and enthusiasm to improve their performance and prepare themselves especially in term of language skills for their career as they were to be English teachers in the near future (see p.191 and 241). Both students themselves also wanted to be more critical as they finally realised the significance of criticality on their lives, not only in the classroom but also in their lives and their future career. They realised that criticality could help them to be more practical, realistic, logical and reflective not only in their thinking, but in the practice and action in their lives.

### **The overall critique of Barnett's framework**

As we can see from the above discussion, it is clear that Barnett's (1997) framework is helpful in the analysis of the students' development of criticality in the literature classroom. Barnett presented the different type of criticality in three separate domains. His views of domains work practically in its application to life. It is not necessary for the students to start their criticality development at the first domain before approaching the second and third in turn (see p.16). Each domain stands on its own and the students can operate in any domain, according to their capability. In my view, the domains of criticality in Barnett's framework are applicable and practical. However, it seems that his notion of levels of criticality is rather difficult to understand. Usually, development refers to levels. However, his framework is not a

developmental one, as I discussed earlier in Chapter 2. In my view, Barnett's use of the word 'level' in his framework is rather confusing and leads people to perceive it as a developmental framework. For Barnett, the development of criticality is not necessary to start from low to high level, so it is the word 'type' instead of 'level' of criticality that should be used in his frameworks. The description that Barnett provided for each level is also quite broad and imprecise which leads to difficulty in understanding each of them exactly. Apart from that, the higher levels that of Level Three - refashioning of traditions, and Level Four - transformatory critique, are too high for the students at an early stage of life such as the two case students: Naree and Kanda are still only undergraduates. The broad and obscure description of each level also leads to difficulty in operationalising data analysis.

I will now talk about the second major framework, that is, Bailin *et al.* (1999) that discusses resources that were essential for the students to accomplish their critical thinking.

### **Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking**

Bailin *et al.* proposed five intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking: *background knowledge, operational knowledge of the standard of good thinking, possession of critical concepts, knowledge of a wide range of strategies or heuristics useful in thinking critically, and certain habits of mind* (see Chapter 2, p.19). According to the data analysis, these five resources are essential for Thai students to accomplish critical thinking. I will also argue for the necessity of additional resources.

#### **Significances of each resource**

Of the provided five intellectual resources, it seems that the most vital for Thai students in the literature classroom is *background knowledge*. The depth of students' background knowledge in a specific context determines the degree

to which they can think critically about the context. Thus, the limitation of this resource in terms of personal background knowledge or academic background knowledge leads students to difficulties in understanding the Western context and language in the English literature that they are studying. As undergraduate students in an Asian context, the students needed to possess enough background knowledge in what they are studying so that they can practise criticality effectively. Without background knowledge, understanding and experience in a particular area of a study, it is difficult for the students to explain or discuss ideas critically. During the semester, Naree and Kanda's background knowledge developed well with the assistance and encouragement of Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics as well as teaching practices which provided clear and vivid explanation and examples in classes as described earlier (see pp.139-140).

In my view, the second resource proposed by Bailin *et al.*, that is, *operational knowledge of the standard of good thinking* is at a higher level and too sophisticated for Thai undergraduates like Kanda and Naree. This resource is the knowledge of relevant standards and principles that prevails over critical judgments. According to Bailin *et al.*, the standards for judging intellectual products includes 'standards for judging the adequacy of claims about meaning, the credibility of statements made by authorities, the reliability of reports made by observers, the validity of deductive argument, the strength of inductive arguments, and the adequacy of moral, legal and aesthetic reasons' (p. 291). Both Naree and Kanda were only undergraduate students, so it was rather difficult for them to possess the knowledge of relevant standards and principles as mentioned in Bailin *et al.*'s framework. They were not mature enough to recognise the rules of logic, standards of argumentation or standards prevailing inquiry and justification in specialised areas of study, and so on, as proposed by Bailin *et al.* They were too immature to make any judgments on the adequacy of moral, legal and aesthetic reason. In their literature classes, they were presented with literary texts to which they had to make a personal response. They were not presented with formal arguments (see p.161). So, this resource is not actually relevant to their experience in

this class and I could not see any explicit development in this resource during the semester.

Bailin *et al.* described the third resource, *possession of critical concepts*, as the ability to identify and make appropriate distinctions of some particular concepts such as definition, implication, argument and so on (p. 293). It is clear that Kanda and Naree could reach them quite well. The evidence may be seen not only in their interviews, but in the classroom observations and their writing. They were able to identify and work with assumptions, arguments, implications of arguments, statements and definitions. An example of their possession of this resource could be seen particularly in the literature class, where both demonstrated useful critical concepts in distinguishing metaphorical and literal language. Clear examples were presented when Naree and Kanda could understand and correctly answer a question in the story *Cricket* which asks about the 'conflict' between the characters in the story (see p. 207 for Naree's answer and pp. 257-258 for Kanda's). Further evidence on Kanda's possession of critical concepts and literary knowledge can also be seen when she thoughtfully discussed the use of 'irony' in the story *Mabel* (see p. 257). We could see that they could understand and make interpretations of the literary text they learned productively.

Both Naree and Kanda possessed the fourth resource i.e. *the strategies or heuristics useful in thinking critically effectively*. Bailin *et al.* defined this resource as the strategies or procedures to think of counter-examples or to make definitions or to make a discussion on a particular issue with others (p. 290). This could be seen in the way both always discussed a problem or issue in the literary text they read with friends when had difficulties of understanding (see p. 192 and 243). Moreover, it is clear from the interviews with them that, they learned from the literature classroom to double-check ideas or issues before accepting them as fact. The lives of characters and the incidents that happened in the various literary texts throughout the semester guided them to comprehend the various perspectives of life. They could realise that life did

not have only one straightforward dimension and it is necessary for them to possess the strategies and procedures to guide their critical decision or performance on it (see p.214 and pp. 264-265). Additionally, in her teaching methods, Ajarn Sodsai always encouraged them to ask themselves the questions 'Why?' and 'Why not?' with every incident and situation that happened to them before making decision or accepting anything as fact. This is something they carried away from the class with them. So, we can see that, Naree and Kanda developed this resource well over the semester with the encouragement of Ajarn Sodsai's teaching practice.

For the last resource, that is, *habits of mind*, both Naree and Kanda possessed this resource to some extent. According to Bailin *et al.*, the attitudes and habit of mind required by critical thinkers are respect for reasons and truth, respect for high-quality products and performances, an inquiring attitude, open-mindedness, fair-mindedness, independent-mindedness, respect for others in group inquiry and deliberation, respect for legitimate intellectual authority, and an intellectual work ethic (pp. 294-95). There were some positive factors that encouraged the development of this resource in Naree and Kanda as well as some other factors that restricted them from the full development. Regarding the positive factors, it was clear that both Naree and Kanda possessed some habits of mind that fostered their criticality development such as cooperativeness, open-mindedness, a willing attitude, fair-mindedness, and respect for others in group inquiry and reflection (see p. 192 and pp. 243-244). However, they still possessed some factors that restricted them from the full development of this resource. These factors were the restriction of their own personality, some aspects of Thai culture and the Thai educational system (see p. 191 and pp. 241-242).

### **Necessity of additional resources**

In my view, these five intellectual resources suggested by Bailin *et al.* are insufficient for Thai students to accomplish their critical thinking. There are additional resources that must be included to suit the characteristics and

requirements of Thai students in particular. The intellectual resources that I am arguing to add into Bailin *et al.*'s framework are

- Language resources
- Cooperativeness
- Self-confidence or self-belief.

All these three additional resources are necessary for Thai students to accomplish their critical thinking and the *language resource* is particularly essential in the English literature classroom. As Thai students whose English is the second or foreign language, it is crucial for them to possess sufficient language ability in all four skills i.e. speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is because language is considered the crucial tool to understand complex ideas and to communicate their critical ideas and opinions, especially in a context where language is the main focus of thinking and reasoning, to understand the content as in the English literature classroom. The significance of language ability was also emphasised by Kaowiwattanakul (2008) as she stated that language difficulty in literary study is one of the factors that limits the students' ability in understanding the text and in developing their critical thinking. During the semester, it is clear that this language resource particularly in terms of writing and speaking skills did not develop well in Naree's (see pp. 219-220) and Kanda's case (see pp.269-272). This is due to the lack of teacher feedback and comments on students' assignments. Other reasons are the heavy workload of the teacher and the large class that not only prevented the teacher from encouraging individual interaction with the students, but prevented the students from interacting with each other. However, it may not be fair to blame the teacher or class size, as it is clear that, even in an ideal teaching situation, students could not learn language so fast.

*Cooperativeness* is another important resource to achieve critical thinking not only in Thai students but all people in general. However, in the Thai context, this resource is important as it is related to the traditional characteristics of

Thais who operate in a collective society. Thinking together is a helpful practice that fosters critical thinking, especially among undergraduates whose personal experiences are still limited. Findings from the students' interviews and classroom observations confirmed that the students felt more confident and secure discussing and sharing ideas with their friends in pairs or in small groups (see pp.192-193 and 231-233). The evidence of development in this resource could not be seen clearly during the semester. This was because both Naree and Kanda already possessed this resource at the beginning of the semester, as did the other students in the class. However, throughout the semester, both of them always had opportunities to practise their cooperativeness through the teacher's tasks and encouragement. This resource is also related to the third resource that is the self-confidence or self-belief that I propose to add to Bailin *et al.*'s framework.

*Self-confidence* or *self-belief* is essential for Thai students and everyone else as well, to attain critical thinking. In Bailin *et al.*'s framework, they mentioned independent-mindedness as one of the necessary resource and defined it as:

Possession of the intellectual honesty and courage necessary for seeking out relevant evidence and basing one's beliefs and action on it, despite pressures or temptations to do otherwise, and the personal strength to stand up for one's firmly grounded beliefs. (p. 295)

However, in my view, in order to achieve independent-mindedness Thai students also need self-confidence so that they will be independently minded to accomplish critical thinking. Self-confidence is an attitude which allows us to have a positive and realistic perception of ourselves and our abilities. It is characterised by personal values such as 'assertiveness, optimism, enthusiasm, affection, pride, independence, trust, the ability to handle criticism and emotional maturity' (Sihera, 2002) and all these are essential values for criticality as mentioned earlier. Self-confidence is learned; it is not inherited. Factors which influence and contribute to students' level of self-confidence are religion, the influence of the culture which formed their perspectives, and their parents in particular. This resource is especially

important for Thai students due to the Thai Buddhist view that regards teachers or elders as role models. They are considered as superior and always right so younger people or students should not be in conflict with them. This practice leads Thai students in general to lack self-confidence and this characteristic affects their presentation and development of critical thinking. In fact, they can think critically, but they are not brave enough and confident enough to express their ideas and opinion or to make discussion. Thus, it is especially necessary for Thai students to achieve self-confidence so that they will become independent-minded people who are confident enough to present their ideas critically.

During the semester, both Naree and Kanda developed this resource well. This was due to the direct encouragement from Ajarn Sodsai's teaching methods and her personal characteristics. She was open-minded to all answers and ideas from the students and also always encouraged them to answer and share their ideas and opinion in classes (see pp. 136-140). Although both Naree and Kanda were encouraged in the same way by Ajarn Sodsai during the semester, it seemed that Naree developed more than Kanda in this resource. This was probably due to Naree's personal characteristics as she was generally a self-confident person, whereas Kanda was quite an introverted and shy person.

For the literature teaching models, each teaching approach arising from the models contributes elements that foster criticality development in the students. From the findings, it appeared that there was not any particular teaching model that would be the most effective to foster students' development of criticality. However, the mixture of literature teaching models and approaches was useful to foster criticality development in the students.

## **Research question 2: How is criticality perceived by**

**a) teachers ,and**

**b) students in an English literature class?**

Concerning research question 2, the cross-case analysis shows that criticality was conceptualised positively by the teacher and students. They perceived criticality as significant not only in the literary study but for any academic discipline and their lives outside the classroom.

### **a)Teacher's perception**

From the data analysis in Chapter 5, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai perceived criticality as important not only in the literature classroom, but in its application in other subjects in general. Apart from that, she also realised the importance of criticality in its application to students' everyday life. For the teacher, Ajarn Sodsai, students' criticality development was one of her goals in teaching literature. She expected the students not only to gain knowledge from the literary works, but also to critically reflect that knowledge to their lives and then perform critical actions related to it in future (see p.157) For Ajarn Sodsai, literature is not just a fiction, but it is an imitation of life that enhances students' ability to learn and practice any kinds of life experience before entering the real world outside the academic realm. She perceived literature as 'a core of studying literature' (see p. 145) and 'an endless learning' (see also p. 145). What she aimed for in her teaching literature is encouraging students to be aware of what they are looking at and then being able to apply it to their lives later on. She saw criticality as essential not only to the students' academic world but their lives in the world beyond. We can see that Ajarn Sodsai's perception of criticality aligned with the three domains of criticality proposed in Barnett's (1997) framework (see pp.145-146). Regarding her belief in and attitude towards students' ability to be critical, Ajarn Sodsai mentioned that in her view everybody has the ability to be

critical, but it depends on the background, the culture and the characteristics of that person.

### **b) Students' perception**

The two case study students perceived criticality positively in the same way as the teacher and they could operate more practically in the first two domains and less significantly in the third domain of the framework (see pp.215-219 and pp. 266-269). Although at the beginning of the semester they did not have full understanding of criticality, in the latter part and also at the end of the semester they had developed a fuller understanding. They were aware of the role of criticality both in the realm of the academic world and the realm of life. They also perceived criticality as an essential quality in their future career as a teacher. Although the teacher expected the students to reach the higher levels, they were only able to reach lower levels because of many limitations which will be discussed in research question 3 , sub-question c) *What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development* (see pp.301-305).

According to the data analysis, Naree's and Kanda's development can be seen in terms of their perception, awareness, and ideas. At the beginning of the semester, Naree's and Kanda's perceptions of criticality were quite different from each other. In the case of Naree, she was aware of the significance of critical thinking and perceived it as important. It seemed that she could practise criticality across the three domains in Barnett's framework from the beginning of the semester. From the first interview with her, it was clear that Naree could apply the knowledge and critical thinking that developed from the literature classroom as a tool to understand life and the nature of problem. Apart from that she could also critically reflect on that knowledge and think about performing critical actions related to the situation or problems she faced as she said in the first interview that studying literature encouraged her to understand more about life and think critically in finding the best solution for any life problems (see p. 183).

In the case of Kanda, at the beginning of the semester she also realised and perceived critical thinking as being important and significant to her studies, not only in literature but in other subjects and in her future career. Throughout the semester and especially at the end of it, in her second interview, there was evidence of development of perception and awareness of criticality related to other aspects of her life. Kanda had profoundly realised the significance of critical thinking outside the classroom and also perceived it as useful not only for career in the future, but also for her life in general. In the second interview, Kanda talked about her perception of criticality in the literature classroom which related to her life outside it. She said that reading various kinds of stories in this course provided her with appreciation of forms of life that she would have to face in the world outside the classroom. She considered this course as a preparation lesson for life which enabled her to understand more about human nature and more of her own life (see p. 264).

Studying literature had encouraged her to understand more about life, that is the domain of the world, and think more critically about it. We can see that, from the literature classroom, Kanda not only had critical formal knowledge, but she could also reflect it critically and willingly in form of critical action in her future career as a teacher. Clear evidence can be seen in her second interview when she mentioned her impression about the story *The Teacher*. For her, this story is usefully applicable to her career as it led her to a strong intention in being a good teacher in the near future (see p. 265).

Clear discussion and evidence of Naree and Kanda's individual perceptions of criticality have been provided in Chapter 6, section *Naree's criticality development over the semester* (see p. 215) and Chapter 7, section *Kanda's criticality development over the semester* (see p.265), respectively. In the next section these development trajectories are compared and related to each other.

## **Research question 3: What is the nature of criticality development in students?**

### **a) How is the criticality of the students developed?**

Although the students perceived criticality as essential to their study and future career, their development of criticality was not fully achieved. There were some factors that encouraged the development of their criticality and there were also some factors which restricted the development. The encouraging factors were students' learning habits, cooperativeness, open-mindedness, the assistance and encouragement from the teacher through her teaching approaches together with their own hard work both inside and outside classes. Teaching from the Buddhist doctrine was another useful factor supporting students' development of criticality. On the other hand, the factors that restricted the students' development of criticality were some aspects of traditional Thai culture, values and characteristics, some characteristics of learning and teaching in the literature classroom, the lack of some resources necessary to accomplish critical thinking and language ability, an essential resource for everyone to achieve their criticality development. The importance of language ability corresponded to what Vygotsky (1962, 1978) proposed in his theoretical framework about the central role of language in cognitive development which led to the developmental process of critical thinking in the students (see p. 30).

### **Naree and Kanda's criticality development over the semester**

The development of criticality in Naree and Kanda is most clearly seen through their interviews, rather than their written assignments. One reason for this was their limited language skills that inhibited them from expressing their ideas and opinions critically in writing. In the interviews, they talked to me in Thai, so it was much easier for them to express their criticality and its application to the three domains. However, there were differences between

Naree and Kanda. For example, the application of Naree's criticality in the form of critical action in the third domain (the world) may be seen more clearly than with Kanda. This was because Naree was more easy-going and extrovert than Kanda, who was conservative and too timid to talk in detail about her personal life in the way Naree did. However, both of them admitted that they gained more insight into their life through the study of English literature and they considered it as a life in miniature. In their views, literature provided them not only with literary knowledge, but knowledge that was practical and applicable to life which encouraged them to learn how to think and act critically in their life outside the classroom. For them, criticality was an essential factor in their lives, not only in the English literature classroom and other classes but in their lives in general.

In their interviews, each student gave several examples and evidence related to their personal experiences with the application of their critical thinking in them. In the case of Naree, a clear example is given in her first interview in Chapter 6 (see p. 188) when she mentioned she could understand the feeling of her mother with whom she was having conflict by comparing it to the feelings of the character in the story *Why, Honey?* She could apply the knowledge and self-reflection that she learned in class and intended to perform it critically in her real life situation. For Kanda, evidence from her interviews and writings confirms that she could also reach across three domains of Barnett's framework, although only in the early levels, in the same way as Naree. The evidence can be seen in her interview in Chapter 7 when she talked about how she intended to apply the knowledge from the story *The Teacher* to her career as a teacher when she graduated (see p.265).

According to the data analysis of Naree and Kanda, we can see that the students' criticality development in the three domains proposed by Barnett can be better developed in integration with each other particularly through the application of effective teaching approaches by the teacher. Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics in being flexible, open-minded, and good-tempered were essential in providing Naree and Kanda with a comfortable, supportive

learning environment which encouraged their critical thinking development as proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical framework.

Additionally, her teaching approach in always asking the students open-ended questions, encouraging them to share ideas and participate in class, and providing a classroom environment in which critical thinking is valued can effectively encouraged the two students to reach the first domain i.e. the formal knowledge particularly in the form of critical reason. Moreover, the written assignments and examination papers with open-ended questions provided by Ajarn Sodsai helped enable Naree and Kanda to develop in the second domain i.e. the self. In their answers, the students had to apply not only their critical reason but also critical self-reflection in Question 1 in the Mid-term examination (see p. 166) and Question 5 in the Final examination (see p. 171).

The integration of the first and second domain can also lead to the further development of the third domain i.e. critical action. In her interviews, Ajarn Sodsai put much emphasis on critical action. The evidence can be seen from Ajarn Sodsai's first interview about her perception of the importance of criticality in literary study as she said that to be critical is to make the students become more aware of what they are perceiving and being able to practically link and apply it to their lives (see p. 144). Further evidence is when she said that she was happy to hear that the students were not only happy in her class, but also to know that what she taught was useful and applicable for their lives. It was her pleasure to know that they could apply the lessons and critical thought they learned in class to their lives (see p. 151). We can see that Ajarn Sodsai not only expected the students to gain knowledge from the lessons she provided in the literary class, but she wanted them to practise self-reflection on the knowledge they gained and then apply it in the form of critical action such as problem solving or reflective practice in their lives outside the academic realm.

### **b) What role do the teachers play in fostering students' criticality?**

As we saw in Chapter 5, it is clear that the role of the teacher was significant for the criticality development of students in the literature classroom. The case study teacher always tried her best in her teaching methods to engage students in dealing with tasks that called for the practice of critical thinking. She also helped them develop intellectual resources for dealing with these tasks and, most of all; she always created an environment that valued critical thinking. Ajarn Sodsai's roles and teaching practices aligned with what Bailin *et al.* (1999) proposed in their theoretical framework about the intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking ( see p. 19) and the three components in teaching critical thinking (see also p. 19). Additionally, the teacher's style of teaching and her personal characteristics were influential in the development of criticality in the students. However, it appeared that to have more effective development, formal written feedback and comments from the teacher were needed. In her class, Ajarn Sodsai employed the three main literary teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991) which are the cultural model, the personal growth model and the language model. However, it appeared that her emphasis was on the first two literary teaching models rather than the last and this probably affected students' language ability, as previously discussed.

### **Learning and teaching practices**

From the study, it is clear that the nature of teaching and the teacher's personality were influential in students' criticality development. In her class, Ajarn Sodsai was always friendly, active and enthusiastic in asking open-ended questions to students and encouraging them to share their ideas and opinions. She was open to students' answers and opinions, no matter how diverse. She always encouraged them to give reasons to support their ideas and created a classroom environment that fostered students' criticality. Additionally, she always tried to support the students in sharing their ideas in small group discussion and consult together both inside and outside classes.

From the classroom observation, most of students in class felt relaxed and happy to participate in class whenever they had a chance to do so. They always consulted and shared ideas together. In the interviews with Kanda and Naree, they said that Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics and the way she was always flexible, open-minded and friendly to the students was important in encouraging the students to practise their critical thinking in her class. To me, this way of teaching can help to encourage students' critical thinking capacity. This is related to what Bailin *et al.* (1999) proposed in their framework about the supportive environmental in class that encourages the students' attempts to think critically and engage in critical discussion.

During the semester, it was clear that Ajarn Sodsai tried to encourage students to practise their criticality in all three domains as proposed by in Barnett's (1997) framework through her personal characteristics and teaching approaches. In her classes, she encouraged students to reach the first domain, formal knowledge, by reading and discussing topics she raised in each story (see p. 137, pp.142-143 and pp.147-148). Then the students were led to the second and third domains, self and the world, by practising critical self-reflection and applying it to a situation in their everyday life through their writing tasks and assignments. During the semester, Ajarn Sodsai strongly encouraged students' practice of criticality across the three domains through her teaching practices and activities. For example, there was a written assignment, *The Teacher*, which clearly encouraged students to operate their criticality through the three domains (see p.165). Another example of Naree's practice of her criticality development may be seen in her answer to Question 5 in the final examination. In this question, Ajarn Sodsai did not require the students to apply their answers to real life situations, only asking students to give examples from the stories to support their answers. However, in her answer Naree could apply what she learned from the course to her life as she wrote that this course enabled her to better see and understand the human nature which consisted of both negative and positive aspects (see p.209).

In Kanda's, unlike Naree's answer for the same question, it is clear that she did not present any of her personal ideas or opinions. She only answered what was asked in the question. However, this did not mean that Kanda could not practise her criticality at all, as we can see that Kanda could present her criticality through other evidence as mentioned in the previous section, *Naree and Kanda's criticality development over the semester* (see p. 291). In my view, if Ajarn Sodsai had encouraged more practice and application of criticality in the assignments and examination, Kanda might have presented more of her critical ideas.

The significance of the teacher in guiding and encouraging students' development of learning and ideas was related to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of the Proximal Development (ZPD) (see p.31). The students could reach the ZPD which is the higher level of performance an individual may reach by collaborating with a more experienced person, i.e. the teacher. The teacher is more capable of the type of critical thinking brought out by her discipline and modelling this interaction with the learners. McCarthey and Raphael (1992, pp.17-18) argued that capable peers might also assist learners, but it is the teacher who should be the model for critical thinking by providing the educational scaffolding involving structuring tasks through instruction, modelling, questioning, and feedback until the learners can operate independently. Thus, we can see that without sufficient input such as the teacher's educational scaffolding, students did not have a stimulus to which to respond.

However, as well the aforementioned positive aspects, there are four negative features related to learning and teaching characteristics that emerged from the classroom observations. These are (1) class size, (2) nature of tasks, assignments, and examinations, (3) teacher's feedback, and (4) teaching load.

Due to the large class size, Ajarn Sodsai could not pay careful attention to each student and could not conduct classes as discussions as should be the case in an English literature class aiming to encourage critical development. It

is difficult for the teacher to provide activities relevant to the students' development of criticality such as group discussion or student presentations as often as is desirable. During lectures, although Ajarn Sodsai tried to promote students' critical thinking by asking them open-ended questions, there was never enough time for every student to respond and share their views in class. This led the rest of the class, especially those students who sat far from the teacher at the back, to passivity and lack of interest in the lessons.

The nature of tasks, assignments, examinations and feedback are other important factors that affected students' development of criticality. Ajarn Sodsai always assigned take-home writing tasks and assignments for every lesson to the students to help students practise their critical thinking during the semester. These assignments were designed to give the students appropriate critical practice and were useful for their criticality development. However, Ajarn Sodsai hardly ever provided formal written feedback or comments to the students' assignments, despite regular overall verbal feedback in class. Her practice in giving verbal feedback to students' ideas was useful for the development of their criticality, but in my view students would have more chance of development with her formal written feedback. For the mid-term and final examinations, their nature and characteristics seemed not to encourage to students' criticality development. Although both examinations were in form of essays which enabled students to practise their criticality in their writings, both were in the form of timed essays instead of a take-home Task. Timed examinations are not supportive of the criticality development of students whose ability in English is rather limited. In fact, the limitation of time is never helpful for anyone to practise their criticality, as it does not allow time and opportunities to reflect on ideas, and this was considered the worst situation for the L2 students in an English literature classroom.

In term of students' language capacity, it did not progressively develop during semester. This is perhaps because one semester is too short for the students

to develop their language ability, especially in writing skills; however, some feedback from the teacher would still be helpful for them to realise what mistakes they were making in their writing so that they would have an opportunity to know how they could improve it gradually throughout the semester. When the students did not have an opportunity to see the outcome of their ideas and language uses, they did not know how to develop their writing skills. However, it is not fair to Ajarn Sodsai to blame her for the lack of feedback for students' writing as it was actually due to her heavy workload and the large class that it was difficult to give individual feedback.

### **Relation of literature teaching approaches to criticality development**

The data analysis has suggested that effective teaching approaches have a considerable influence on students' criticality development.

According to classroom observation, Ajarn Sodsai always made attempts to provide an environment that encouraged critical thinking in her class. She used a mixture of literature teaching models and approaches in her classroom. She always focused on aspects of ideas, content, culture and the students' perspective rather than the language of the literary works. Thus, among the three literature teaching models proposed by Carter and Long (1991), *the cultural model*, *the language model* and *the personal growth model*, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai focused on the first and third models rather than the second, the language model.

#### **The cultural model**

Ajarn Sodsai's practice of the cultural model with the application of an information-based approach was seen regularly in her classes. Literature was the subject that provided the diversity of culture in its content; Ajarn Sodsai always encouraged students to understand and appreciate different cultures and ideologies and relate them to their own (see pp.139-140 and p. 161). She

enabled students to achieve knowledge from the literary works by giving lectures, explanation and raising discussion topics. All these practices were beneficial to students' practice and development of critical thinking as the students had a chance to gain knowledge about different cultures presented in the literary works. It is clear that this cultural model related to Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) resource of background knowledge proposed in their framework. Then, with the assistance of the teacher in providing questions or discussion topics, the students could gradually learn how to reflect on that knowledge in terms of self-reflection, the second domain in Barnett's framework. This practice also related to Barnett's third domain as it made a relationship to the domain of the world in the form of students' critical action later on. Both Naree and Kanda responded well to this literature teaching model. The evidence can be seen in their interviews which stated that Ajarn Sodsai's personal characteristics and her teaching approach in providing vivid and clear explanations for any specific or unfamiliar cultural aspects successfully encouraged them to understand not only the different culture, but also their own culture more clearly (see p. 211 and p. 261).

### **The personal growth model**

This teaching model was also practised by Ajarn Sodsai in her class with the application of a reader-response approach. During her teaching, Ajarn Sodsai always encouraged the students to seek opportunities to relate and respond to the themes and issues by making a connection to their personal lives. As an example of practice for the students, Ajarn Sodsai herself also inserted her own experiences related to the stories for the students and this was helpful to the students' understanding of the stories. She was also open-minded and flexible when listening to students' various forms of understandings and interpretations. Thus, her teaching practice could be seen as the application of the reader-response approach. She focused on the literary text, the readers (i.e. the students) and the students' interaction with the text. This teaching approach offered an opportunity for the students to develop their own multiple interpretations. These multiple interpretations led to an atmosphere of creative

and critical thinking where there was no need for a correct answer or the best interpretation. This encouraged the students to make connections between the domains by applying their critical knowledge and critical self-reflection while practising their diverse interpretations of the literary works. This personal growth model also related to one of Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking, that is, the 'habits of mind'. It encouraged the students to relate and respond to the themes and issues by making a connection to their personal lives. Students would have a chance to express their ideas, feelings and opinions and make connections between their own personal and cultural experiences and those expressed in the text. This model was also applicable to the domain of reason and self in Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality as it encouraged the students to use their personal background and experience to create their own interpretation of the stories.

Naree and Kanda presented different responses to this literature teaching model. Naree had a good response to this teaching model due to her active, out-going and self-confident characteristics. The way she usually related her personal experience in the interviews and her written assignments enabled me to evidently see her personal growth throughout the semester (see p. 185 and 187). In the case of Kanda, her criticality development in term of personal growth and personal response cannot be witnessed clearly. This is primarily due to her personal characteristics of being reserved, timid and silent. Not only in the interviews but also in her writings, Kanda did not prefer to present much of her personal background and experience. Thus, it is not easy to see her criticality development in term of personal growth and personal response from the data analysis (see pp.273-274).

### **The language model**

According to the data analysis, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai did not focus much on the language model. Her intention was not explicitly to encourage students to improve their language proficiency by using literature as a resource for

language teaching. Evidence of this can be seen in her lack of feedback, comments or corrections on students' writing assignments. However, it could be said that she did not totally ignore this model as in some classes she employed a stylistic approach by emphasising to the students the way in which language and meaning in literature are interrelated and how language is used to create particular effects. Another example of her application of the language model may be seen in her practice of the paraphrastic approach in her classes. Ajarn Sodsai often paraphrased the vocabulary or sometimes even translated it into Thai for the students. This approach is helpful for those students whose English is weak as it helped facilitate their comprehension of a particular literary text. They did not have to spend time searching for meanings and definitions and had more leisure to spend on critical interpretation of the content. We can see that, language is an important resource for the students both to comprehend the complicated ideas and concepts in literary text and also to communicate their ideas critically. However, Bailin *et al.* did not include this resource as one of the vital intellectual resources in their framework to accomplish critical thinking.

**c) What impact do other aspects of the teaching and learning context play in students' criticality development?**

It is clear from the findings from classroom observations and interviews that other aspects of the teaching and learning context played a significant role in students' criticality development. Those aspects were *1) nature of the tasks, assignments and examinations, 2) class size, 3) characteristics of the learning and teaching environment, 4) language ability, and 5) Thai culture, values and student personal characteristics.*

It is clear that the written assignments, short essay and examinations provided throughout the semester fostered students' development of criticality, as the students had opportunities to present their critical ideas and reasoned judgement through their writings. However, this development should have gone hand in hand with the regular feedback on formal writing and

comments from the teachers, but class size restricted the amount of feedback possible. Apart from that, the classroom atmosphere and environment that valued critical thinking and supported students' attempt to think critically and engage in critical discussion as proposed in Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) theoretical framework was essential to the development of their criticality. According to Vygotsky (1962, 1978), the role of social interaction was also essential in the development of cognition and higher level of thinking. Therefore, the students needed more interaction in the classroom to encourage and provide them with further opportunities to practise and present their opinions and ideas critically.

As Thai students who studied English as a second language, it is clear that Naree and Kanda had limited language ability in English. Although they are English major students who are to be English teachers in the near future, their English was not at an advanced level. They had some problems with all the four necessary skills in language learning i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. For *listening*, according to the classroom observations, it seems that they did not have many difficulties with it as Ajarn Sodsai used both Thai and English in her lectures and, as a Thai teacher; her accent was not too difficult for the students to understand. In *speaking*, Naree was a little better than Kanda and it was clear that, in class, she could use English more fluently to discuss or express her ideas. The use of Thai in the interviews enabled them to express their ideas fluently and critically as we saw in the previous chapters. According to their interviews in Thai, they could think critically and apply what they thought to their everyday life situation (see pp. 215-216 and pp. 266-267).

In term of *reading* skills, both Kanda and Naree had some difficulties in their practice as both still had a limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures. This sometimes became an obstacle to their understanding and interpretation of the literary text. In *writing*, it is clear that both Kanda and Naree's skills were not at a high level, as may be seen in their writing assignments and also mid-term and final examinations. Both their assignments still contain many mistakes such as grammatical structures,

word choices, sentence structures, vocabulary, spelling, and so on. Evidence of their criticality was therefore not clearly presented in their writing. However, Kanda's writing ability was slightly better than Naree's.

It was not just their limitation in English grammar that presented an obstacle to their presentation of criticality, but also that, as second language students, it was painfully difficult for them to express their ideas in English at a sufficiently sophisticated level for an advanced English literature course. Both Naree and Kanda possessed criticality, but one of the main barriers to its development, especially in an English literature class, was their ability in English. It became a major impediment to the presentation of their critical ideas in writing. This relates to what I have discussed in Chapter 2, section *Psychological approaches* (see p. 29) and Vygotsky's focus on the central role of language in cognitive development and how the lack of language restricts students' ability to learn. Accordingly, it is clear that language is a necessary resource for not only Naree and Kanda in particular, but all students' development of criticality, especially in the literature classroom; however Bailin *et al.* did not mention the significance of this resource in their framework.

Thai culture and values are influential in students' development of criticality. It is clear that both teachers and students are positioned amidst the tensions between attempting to promote criticality and the desire to preserve Thai culture. Criticality tends to value open-mindedness, individualism, challenge, self-confidence and the presentation of ideas and opinions. However, Thai culture tends to value the respect for seniority, harmony, humility, collectivism and uncertainty avoidance. All these values and characteristics are directly related to the behaviour of saving face and *kriang jai* (see Chapter 3, p. 77) which leads Thais to attempt to maintain calm in their lives and to go to great lengths to avoid confrontation. The concept of *kriang jai* suggests an unwillingness to burden someone older or superior with one's problems. Moreover, it also leads to students' reluctance to ask questions, contribute to discussion or express their ideas and opinions in class. According to the data

analysis, it is clear that Ajarn Sodsai realised the influence of Thai culture and values on students' development of criticality. She always tried her best to reduce aspects discouraging the development of criticality and encourage other positive aspects by not attaching herself to the traditional Thai culture and way of teaching that discourages students' criticality (see pp.159-160).

As well as the personal characteristics of Ajarn Sodsai being helpful to students' development of criticality in the literature classroom, there were supporting factors in the cooperative nature of the students and Buddhist teaching. Although many of the traditional Thai values and characteristics prevalent among students inhibited their development of criticality, other characteristics such as their collaboration and cooperation are significant factors encouraging critical development. These characteristics encouraged them to think together and exchange ideas which led to increased opportunities for criticality, as it is hard for someone alone to be critical of things around them. Evidence may be seen in the interviews with Naree (see p.192) and Kanda (see p. 243), both of whom always read with a small group of friends before or after classes, sharing ideas and discussing unclear points. The findings from the classroom observations also present the cooperative and supportive characteristics of Naree, Kanda and other students in class. They consult together and these foster deep understanding and hence knowledge building and critical thinking.

Another influential factor in students' development of criticality is the Thai national religion, Buddhism, and especially its benevolent teaching, *Kalama Sutta*, which teaches people not to accept or believe anything immediately without giving it profound thought (see Chapter 3, pp. 65-67). The evidence could be clearly seen in Naree's answer for Question 5 in the final examination as she mentioned the significance of the Buddha's dhamma in lives of all Buddhism and applied it in her answer (see p. 209).

Thus, we can see that, although the students did not always practise it and were unaware of the significance of the benevolent teaching of *Kalama Sutta*

in their everyday life, at least they realised the significance of Buddhism as a religion that relates to the nature of reality, perception and logic or reasonable thinking, leading to an understanding of their experiences of the world.

# **Chapter 9**

## **Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

A case study in criticality development in a literature classroom based on the application of 'criticality' framework of Barnett (1997), and the 'resources' framework of Bailin et al (1999) is a new topic in the Thai context. This study was conducted with the aim of achieving an in-depth understanding of the conceptualisation of criticality in a literature class. In Chapter 1, I discussed my personal experiences concerning the difficulties in fostering criticality in a literature class which led to this study, aiming to investigate perceptions, expectations and experiences of criticality among the teachers and students in an English literature classroom. Chapter 2 provided a related literature review on the conceptualisation of critical thinking and literature teaching which provided a comprehensive view of critical thinking theory and also highlighted the two main theoretical frameworks adopted in this study i.e. Barnett's (1997) model of criticality and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking. Then, in Chapter 3, I provided background information about three aspects of the Thai context influential in students' development of criticality, i.e. 1) traditional Thai culture and values, 2) religion, and 3) the educational system. In Chapter 4, I discussed and justified the adoption of case study as my research methodology together with the practice of my fieldwork.

Following on from that, in Chapters 5 to 7, I discussed the data collected during my fieldwork. Chapter 8 provided a cross-case analysis of the three

case studies where I presented the synthesis and comparison of the analysis in order to see the holistic picture of criticality development in literature classroom and in order to answer the research questions I set out in Chapter 1.

In the following sections, I will first discuss the implications and contribution of the study in four main areas. Next, I will explain the limitations of this study. Finally, I will provide suggestions for further research.

## **Implications and contributions of the study**

My research has examined the conceptualisation of criticality in literature classes as well as the perceptions and awareness of a teacher and two students' development of criticality in the literature class. Based on the findings in this study, I will suggest four implications and contributions.

### **The implications for conceptualisation of criticality development in the literature classroom**

This study presents a holistic conceptualisation of criticality development in the literature class, particularly in a Thai context. It provides an understanding that intellectual resources are one of the essential factors for the students to accomplish critical thinking and criticality development. This thesis also provides an insight into the incorporation of knowledge within relevant context, the attitudes, habits of mind and other additional resources which will lead to more effective performance of criticality development. Additionally, it provides the understanding of the three main social factors that are influential to the development of criticality in the Thai context, that is, Thai culture and values, religion and the educational system. From the study, it is clear that, certain elements of Thai culture are incompatible with criticality development; however, some support such development. This thesis has elaborated the subtleties of criticality development situation in the Thai context. Such an

analysis suggests that in other cultures there may be similar important factors which may help or hinder criticality development. From this thesis, there is an insight that local, cultural, educational and social factors are likely to play a significant role in the development of criticality. What is needed for such development is not only a critical thinking opportunity, but a critical thinking context for both teachers and students.

### **The implications for literature teaching in Thailand and the rest of the world**

This study presented insights into understanding of criticality development in the literature classroom, particularly in the Thai context. According to the findings, it is clear that language ability affects students' achievement in studying English literature and that criticality is more difficult to practise when it is in English, that is, in a foreign language. We can see that there are tensions between the use of English as medium of instruction and the development of student criticality. In a non-native or second language contexts like Thailand or other countries where English is not their first language, the students face certain difficulties not only in terms of cultural but also language differences. Students' ability in English language may affect their success in studying English literature as students with limited English ability are likely to face problems in reading and understanding literary text. These students always have to encounter difficulties in comprehending the meaning and grammatical usage at the lexical, semantic, syntactic, or stylistic levels in the literary works. An earlier study carried out in a Thai university indicated that students struggle to have a complete understanding of the stories they read as the literary texts are full of lexico-grammatical complexities (Cheavinchai, 2002). It is clear in this study of criticality development that students' problems in understanding the literary text led to their difficulties in practising critical thinking.

In the case of students whose English is at a low intermediate level like the case study students, there should be more emphasis on language-related teaching approaches in English literature classes in order to increase their language capacity. Perhaps those responsible in Thailand and other countries where English is the second/foreign language should think about recommending that literature teaching should be in a mixture of English and the native language. This will help facilitate students' understanding of literary text and foster their development of criticality. However, the issue of whether to use the target language or the native language in the literature classroom in order to foster students' criticality development remains debatable. It depends whether the priority of the literature course is on language development, or criticality development, or both. Additionally, it depends on the teaching and learning context and the language level of the students themselves. For students with a high level of English language, the focus of a literature course could be on criticality development. On the other hand, the focus of a literature course could be on language development instead of criticality development if the students' English language level is low. However, if the students' English language is at an intermediate level, probably there could be a balance between the focus on English language development and criticality development in a literature course.

For Ajarn Sodsai, it is clear that the focus in her literature course was not the students' language development. She used both English and Thai in the lectures and class discussion to enrich the students' understanding of the literary texts they were dealing with. Although Ajarn Sodsai required the students to perform their written assignments and examination papers in English, she still did not put much emphasis on their language use. What she focused on more was their presentation of critical ideas and evidence from the stories. In her teaching approaches, she focused on cultural resources and personal responses from the students which were beneficial to the development of student's criticality. Regarding the relationship of her teaching approaches to the two main theoretical frameworks of criticality applied in this study, it is clear that her teaching approaches were strong in their relationship

to Barnett's (1997) first domain (i.e. formal knowledge) and second domain (i.e. the self) which were in turn potentially beneficial to the students' criticality development in the third domain (i.e. the world). Her teaching approach was also strong in its application of Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resource of background knowledge and certain habits of mind in thinking critically. However, it was not strong as regards the language resource which is another factor necessary for students' development of criticality.

Given that these tensions between language and criticality development cannot be fully resolved and given that the classroom context (large classes, students with relatively low levels of English) cannot be changed, it is possible that conditions could be altered to facilitate both the cultural aspects currently focused on and greater language development as well. For example, there could be continuing emphasis on the social and cultural aspects which prevail in literary works as this would also help build up students' intellectual resources that could lead them to criticality development later on. The teacher could set the class to take part in small group discussions and present their diverse ideas on the different topics in class. This method would promote the practice of peer assistance among the students because in a small group it is possible for each of the members to share their ideas and knowledge, and so to be able to learn and think more critically. Moreover, in small group discussion and presentations, each student would have the benefit of peer knowledge and feedback in small groups, as well as that of the teacher. They would have opportunities to think for themselves, rather than having the teacher doing all their thinking for them. They could also develop and apply their critical thinking on how to give useful feedback to their peers

Alternatively, the class could be assigned to two big groups and discuss ideas in the form of a debate, which is an effective means of encouraging critical thinking, and possession of critical concepts in the students. A benefit of debate as a classroom activity that enhances a student's ability to think critically is claimed by Wilbanks and Church (1991):

We view learning argumentation and participating in debates...as extremely valuable...The usefulness of developing abilities such as analysis, problem solving, critical thinking, organizational proficiency, research prowess, and confidence in presentation is enduring. Long after the course is over, the student will continue to benefit from these skills (p. vii).

Debate is also a helpful method for Thai students to practise their cooperativeness and self-confidence which are the additional resources necessary to achieve critical thinking that I proposed in Chapter 8 (see pp. 278 – 279). In order to provide them with chances to practise their English language either in a small class presentation or a debate, the students should have sufficient time to prepare to present their ideas in English. The teacher could probably provide them with a certain amount of time (i.e. a week or two) to prepare the information and create a presentation script or to do some rehearsals before the actual presentation in class. Additionally, it would be most beneficial to the student if the teacher could check the script of any presentation made for language content if the students wanted that. This method would help them to have more time to think critically and would also lessen their worry and difficulty in using English to present complicated ideas in a limited time.

From the point of view of selection of literature, the students clearly found it is easiest to relate to the first story, *The Teacher*, because it is closest to their situations. Therefore, perhaps there should be more emphasis on text-selection by the teachers and the texts present situations closer to their own. However, a balance in text selection is necessary. Perhaps the selected texts should be neither too close to students' situation that they lose the chance to learn about other cultures, nor so far that it would discourage the students' motivation to read them. Being L2 students, they are struggling with language, understanding a different culture while they read, and also developing criticality. With their limited ability in language, the students cannot understand the text fully. Consequently, it is difficult for them to express their ideas effectively and critically in both their writings and speaking. If some of those factors could be lessened in difficulty by, for example, offering texts

which present more familiar situations, this might make it easier for the students to practise their criticality.

### **The implication for teaching policy in criticality development**

In term of teaching policy, my study has contributed to ensure quality in criticality development, not only in the English literature class, but in all levels of Thai education particularly in higher education. In my view, it is necessary for administrators and policy makers in higher education to form teaching policy and practice that fosters criticality in the students, as proposed by Barnett (1997) that:

Widen to embrace not just the capacities to think critically but to understand oneself critically and to act critically, higher education becomes the formation of critical persons who are not subject to the world but able to act autonomously and purposively within it. A higher education for the modern world becomes a process in which critical being is realised. (p. 4)

From the findings, students' capacity to respond critically is affected by their personal reactions and willingness to communicate openly. In order to encourage such capacity in the students, administrators and policy makers in education should considering embedding teaching which focuses on students' self-confidence and willingness to speak out in much earlier educational stages. By the time the students have reached the final year undergraduate studies, it is almost too late to make major changes. Assessment is another factor associated with students' criticality development. In order to encourage students to practise their criticality, assessment in English literature and other related subjects should not only be of writing, but include verbal and personal skills. This might encourage greater development of the ability to speak out and develop views. This method of assessment should be implemented at much lower levels of the curriculum as well as at university.

Additionally, my study revealed the influence of Buddhist teachings on criticality development and emphasised the significance of Buddhist teachings in promoting criticality not only in Thai higher education but its whole range. It is clear that the concept of logical reasoning and the idea of criticality prevail in Buddha's teaching. However, it appears that Thai people ignore the essence of these invaluable teachings. Thus, it is necessary to put emphasis on the significance of our own philosophy in order to encourage the development of criticality among Thai people. Moreover, the understanding and realisation of the significance of Buddha's teaching in criticality development should also be expanded and implemented in other Buddhist countries in general.

### **The implication for teacher education**

In terms of teacher education, the study suggested contributions to teachers' education and training in criticality development, not only in the literature classroom, but in other disciplines. According to Ashton (1980), teachers' critical thinking ability has significant influence on the development of students' critical thinking. He urges schools of education to improve teacher training and provide cognitive skills to pre-service teachers before training them to teach these skills in the classroom. According to the importance of criticality development provided in this study, there should be an integration of critical thinking into all aspects of teacher education and training in order to equip future teachers with effective thinking approaches so that they may become models of critical being for their students. In my study, the case study teacher practised her criticality well in her teaching approach. However, for other teachers in general, if they do not comprehend criticality and have no experience practising it themselves, how can they be the role models or explicitly nurture it in their students. Teacher education and training in criticality also leads to social problem solving in general. This is because the increased emphasis on criticality in teacher education would increase the emphasis on criticality in the students. Then, perhaps the increased emphasis on criticality in students would, consequently, lead to increased practice of

criticality within society. Both teachers and students could develop both their intellectual and cognitive abilities that support the transfer of criticality to all aspects of life.

## **Limitations of the study**

The main limitation of this study is that this was a case study conducted in a single setting with a small number of participants. It was confined to the English literature class in a public university in Thailand. However, the study has wider applicability.

Theoretical conceptualisations such as those of Barnett (1997) and Bailin *et al.* (1999) are applicable in different settings. These theoretical frameworks were developed in very different contexts from those of Thai literature classrooms, yet I have applied them successfully there. Similarly, my modifications, such as the addition of the language resource, cooperativeness and self-confidence may be applied in different contexts from Thailand. In my study, I explored the situation of criticality development in a literature classroom by using a theoretical conceptualisation as framework for data analysis. I conducted this study in a way that allowed others in similar situations and contexts to make decisions on whether any parts of the findings and implications could be transferred to and applied in their contexts. The findings and implications gained from my study are suggestive rather than conclusive of the situations.

## **Suggestions for future research**

This case study is an attempt to examine the approach to criticality development in a L2 literature classroom in the Thai context. There are several other directions for conducting further research concerning criticality development in either a Thai or other context.

Further research could be conducted in multiple settings and other subject areas, for example, other literature classes in other universities to see the generalisation of the cases. Apart from that the scope of participants should be expanded to include not only the teachers of the literature classes but also the administrators and policy makers of the institutions in order to see their perceptions and awareness of criticality development. Longitudinal studies in successive semesters or academic years of students to investigate their development of perceptions and practices of criticality might also be conducted, in literature classes and other disciplines in order to see the broader and deeper picture of criticality development in various disciplines.

It would also be valuable to design a teaching model based on the integration of Barnett's (1999) criticality model, and Bailin's *et al.* (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking, and literature teaching models and then to conduct an action research study on the application of the integrated teaching model. This study would be useful to put theoretical conceptualisations of criticality into practise in literature classroom and also in other disciplines.

Additionally, it would be useful to conduct further research on teacher questions and questioning techniques that foster criticality in the literature classes and also other disciplines. The present study has helped me to see the close connection between questioning and criticality. The use of questioning to evoke prior knowledge and critical thinking development in students was argued by Christenbury and Kelly (1983):

Questioning, then, helps students discover their own ideas, it gives students and opportunity to explore and argue and to sharpen critical thinking skills, it allows students to function as experts and to interact among themselves, it gives the teacher invaluable information about student ability and achievement.' (p. 3)

It would be useful to carry out these studies in order to broaden and deepen our understanding of criticality development because of its significance in the

educational system, and the students or young people who are the most essential human resources for the development of a nation. In order to succeed in this rapidly changing world, it is necessary to equip them not only with a sufficient breadth of education but the capacity to manage and incorporate greatly expanded quantities of information. It is one of the responsibilities of the educational system to build up this young generation to become a valuable human resource for their society. It is necessary to encourage young people to ask themselves Socratic questions such as 'What is the source of this information?' 'What assumption am I making?' 'What is an alternate explanation for this phenomenon?' with the current social, political or economic situation they face every day. The modern society is in need of young people who are fully equipped with critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action to run a modern society and contribute to its further advancement.

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## **Appendices**

## Appendix A: Ethical protocol guidance



### Ethical Protocol Guidance

#### A. ETHICS PROTOCOL GUIDANCE FORM

#### B. ETHICS PROTOCOL

Title of Project:      Approaches to Criticality Development in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in Thai University

Name of Principal Investigator: Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet

**Ethics Protocol** (Please provide details here of the ethics protocol for your research and append your Consent form and Participant Information sheet)

See the attached consent forms and information sheet for detail of the project.  
See also ethics review checklist form.

There are aspects to research governance that are outside the remit of the Research Ethics Committee, but which you must address to ensure that you are insured for the research you are undertaking. Before beginning to research you should complete an IRGA form and forward it to the Programme Office (students) or Research Office (staff), together with your CH1/CH2, EP1, Consent form, Participant Information sheet and research proposal.

### Ethical Protocol Guidance

#### A ETHICS PROTOCOL GUIDANCE FORM

This guidance has been developed to assist you in drawing up an ethics protocol for a research project or bid for research funding. You are advised to also look at the following materials provided by the School of Education Research Ethics Committee, which are available on the School of Education Website:

- Student/Staff Research: Ethics Review Checklist
- Ethics Review Procedure Flow Diagram
- Ethics Reading List

The Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2004) published by the British Educational Research Association are also useful (available on their website at <http://www.bera.ac.uk/publications/guides.php>).

#### A. CHECKLIST

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT HOW YOU WILL ADDRESS:	YES	NO
1. your responsibilities to the participants	/	
2. your responsibilities to the sponsors of the research	/	
3. your responsibilities to the community of educational researchers	/	

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED HOW YOU WILL:	YES	NO
4. fully inform participants about the nature of the research;	/	
5. ensure participants agree to take part freely and voluntarily;	/	
6. inform participants that they can withdraw freely at any time;	/	
7. justify deception of participants if this is necessarily involved;	/	
8. offer protection for any vulnerable participants or groups in your study;	/	
9. manage the differential 'power relationships' in the setting;	/	
10. avoid any pressure on participants to contribute under duress or against their free will;	/	
11. guarantee that any research assistants or support staff involved in the project understand and adhere to the ethical guidelines for the project;	/	

HAVE YOU CONSIDERED:	YES	NO
12. what procedures to set in place to ensure a balance between a participant's right to privacy and access to public knowledge;	/	
13. how best to provide anonymity and confidentiality and ensure participants are aware of these procedures?		
14. the implications of the Data Protection Act (1998) particularly in respect to the storage and availability of the data.	/	
15. disclosure of information to third parties and getting permission from the participants to use data in any reports/books/articles.	/	
16. how you are going to inform the participants of the outcomes of the research;	/	
17. how to handle any conflicts of interest arising from sponsorship of the research e.g. a chocolate company sponsoring research into child nutrition, or your own vested interests if any,	/	
18. how you will protect the integrity and reputation of educational research.	/	

Having considered these questions draw up specific procedures for how you will handle the collection and dissemination of data in your research study.

**Student Research Project: Ethics Review Checklist - Form CH2-Student**

This checklist should be completed by the researcher (with the advice of the research supervisor/tutor) for every research project which involves human participants. Before completing this form, please refer to the Ethical Guidelines in the School's Research Student Handbook and the British Educational Research Association guidelines (<http://www.bera.ac.uk/guidelines.html>).

**Project Title:**

Approaches to Critical Thinking Development in Literature Classroom: a Case Study  
in Thai University

Researcher(s): .....Pornravee Thunnithet..... Student ID number:...21393044.....

Supervisor: Prof. Mike Grenfell Email: [grenfell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:grenfell@soton.ac.uk),  
Dr. Brenda Johnston Email: [B.H.M.Johnston@soton.ac.uk](mailto:B.H.M.Johnston@soton.ac.uk)

Part One	YES	NO
1. Does the study involve participants who are particularly vulnerable or unable to give informed consent? (e.g. children with special difficulties)	/	
2. Will the study require the co-operation of an advocate for initial access to the groups or individuals? (e.g. children with disabilities; adults with a dementia)	/	
3. Could the research induce psychological stress or anxiety, cause harm or have negative consequences for the participants (beyond the risks encountered in their normal life and activities)?	/	
4. Will deception of participants be necessary during the study? (e.g. covert observation of people)?	/	
5. Will the study involve discussion of topics which the participants would find sensitive (e.g. sexual activity, drug use)?	/	
6. Will the study involve prolonged or repetitive testing or physical testing? (e.g. long periods at VDU, use of sport equipment such as a treadmill) and will a health questionnaire be needed?	/	
7. Will the research involve medical procedures? (e.g. are drugs, placebos or other substances to be administered to the participants or will the study involve invasive, intrusive or potentially harmful procedures of any kind?)	/	
8. Will financial inducements (other than reasonable expenses or compensation for time) be offered to participants?	/	
9. Will you be involving children under sixteen for whom additional consent will be required?	/	
10. Will you have difficulties anonymising participants and/or ensuring the information they give is non-identifiable?	/	
11. Will you have difficulty in explicitly communicating the right of participants to freely withdraw from the study at any time?	/	
12. Will the study involve recruitment of patients or staff through the NHS?	/	
13. If you are working in a cross-cultural setting will you need to gain additional knowledge about the setting to be able to be sensitive to particular issues in that culture (e.g. sexuality, gender role, language use)?	/	
14. Will you have difficulties complying with the Data Protection Act (e.g. not keeping unnecessary personal data and keeping any necessary data locked or password protected)?	/	
15. Are there potential risks to your own health and safety in conducting this research (e.g. lone interviewing other than in public spaces)?	/	

If you have answered NO to all of the above questions and you have discussed this form with your supervisor and had it signed and dated, you may proceed to develop an ethics protocol with the assistance of the Ethical Protocol Guidance Form which must also be completed. If you have answered YES to any of the questions, please complete PART TWO of this form below and adopt a similar procedure of discussion with supervisor, signing and proceeding to develop an actual ethical protocol with the assistance of the Ethical Protocol Guidance Form. Please keep a copy of both forms and protocol for your records. Only in exceptional circumstances will cases need to be referred to the School's Research Ethics Committee.

Part Two For each item answered 'YES' please give a summary of the issue and action to be taken to address it.

I will have difficulties anonymising the participant in the study who are teachers and/or ensuring the information they give is non-identifiable in the local context. These difficulties are due to the small number of literature teachers in the English Division at the university which is my research site so that any details mentioned about each teacher in the research can be easily recognised by colleagues.

During the pilot study, I asked the teachers whether they would like to be sent a report on the project findings at the end of the project and they did not want to receive it. So, it seems that teachers in the local context are unlikely to want to read the thesis or a report of my research finding. However, there will still be difficulties anonymising the teacher participant in the study.

The actions to be taken for this issue are that 1) at the beginning of the study (when giving informed consent), I will promise the participants the anonymity for their participation as much as possible; 2) I will promise that identifiable personal information gathered for research purpose cannot be delivered or presented to administrative officials making decisions affecting research participants and ; 3) teachers will be presented information respectfully and with due consideration for the contextual constraint within which the teachers are operating. For example, I will avoid providing too much detailed information about each teacher participant by removing direct identification, altering names and other proper names (by using pseudonyms) and editing background information into broad categories rather than specific details.

For the student participants, anonymity will not be a problem because, unlike teacher participants, there will be numbers of students participants in the research and each of them will be presented by using pseudonyms so that their names and identities will not be able to identify easily in the local context.

Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary

Signed : Pornrawee Thunnithet  
(Researcher)

Date: 13 Aug 2008

To be completed by the Supervisor (PLEASE TICK ONE)

- Appropriate action taken to maintain ethical standards - no further action necessary. This project now has ethical approval.
- The issues require the guidance of the School of Education's Ethics Committee. This project does not yet have ethical approval.

COMMENTS:

Signed (supervisor on behalf of SoE Research Ethics Committee):

Date:

There are aspects to research governance that lie outside 'ethics', but which are important for you to consider. These include data protection, insurance, and health and safety issues. You should seek advice re same from your Supervisor in the first instance, and then if necessary from your Programme Director.

## Appendix B: Research governance approval letters

UNIVERSITY OF  
Southampton

Ms Pornrawee Thunnithet  
School of Education  
University of Southampton  
University Road  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

RGO REF - 5980

26 August 2008

Dear Ms Thunnithet

**Public Liability Insurance**

**Project Title** Approaches to Criticality in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in a Thai University.

Participant Type:	No Of Participants:	Participant Age Group:	Notes:
Healthy volunteers	82	Adults	Thailand

Thank you for forwarding the completed questionnaire and attached papers.

Having taken note of the information provided, I can confirm that this project will be covered under the terms and conditions of the above policy, subject to written consent being obtained from the participating volunteers.

If there are any changes to the above details, please advise us as failure to do so may invalidate the insurance.

Yours sincerely



Mrs Ruth McFadyen  
Insurance Services Manager

Tel: 023 8059 2417  
email: hrm@soton.ac.uk

cc: File

Ms Pornrawee Thunnithet  
School of Education  
University of Southampton  
University Road  
Highfield  
Southampton  
SO17 1BJ

29 August 2008

Dear Ms Thunnithet

RGO Ref: 5980

**Project Title** Approaches to Criticality in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in a Thai University.

I am writing to confirm that the University of Southampton is prepared to act as sponsor for this study under the terms of the Department of Health Research Governance Framework for Health and Social Care (2nd edition 2005).

The University of Southampton fulfils the role of Research Sponsor in ensuring management, monitoring and reporting arrangements for research. I understand that you will be acting as the Principal Investigator responsible for the daily management for this study, and that you will be providing regular reports on the progress of the study to the Research Governance Office on this basis.

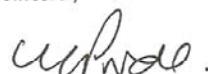
I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your responsibilities under the terms of the Research Governance Framework, and the EU Clinical Trials Directive (Medicines for Human Use Act) if conducting a clinical trial. We encourage you to become fully conversant with the terms of the Research Governance Framework by referring to the Department of Health document which can be accessed at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/24/27/041224>

In this regard if your project involves NHS patients or resources please send us a copy of your NHS REC and Trust approval letters when available.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional information or support. May I also take this opportunity to wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely



Dr Martina Prude  
Head of Research Governance  
Tel: 023 8059 5058  
email: [rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk](mailto:rgoinfo@soton.ac.uk)

## Appendix C: Information sheet



### Information Sheet

#### Approaches to Criticality Development in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in Thai University

The general objective of this research project for my PhD Thesis at the School of Education, University of Southampton, UK is to investigate effective approaches which will foster criticality development in literature classroom. Criticality has been considered as one of the most essential skills for higher education. Many attempts have been made by teachers of various disciplines including literature study to integrate methodological approaches which enhance criticality development into the curriculum. The ability to think critically is highly considered in all fields of study and at all levels of educations, particularly at the higher education level where students have to expand their knowledge and apply it for their future career. Literature is also considered as one of the subjects which can enhance the students' criticality.

This rationale leads to the aim of this research which is to study teachers' perception of criticality development and their practices through some teaching approaches to foster such development in the students. Apart from that, its aim is also to investigate student's perception and awareness of their own development of criticality through the utilization of effective teaching approaches by the teachers. The focus of this research is English literature teachers and English major students who enroll in English literature courses. The data gathered from this research will be analysed qualitatively to understand the teachers' and students' perception and awareness of the importance of criticality in literature classroom and to examine the problems of criticality development. The outcome of this research is to build theoretical concepts and practice about the effective teaching approaches which help to foster criticality development in English literature in Thai context.

This research project will be conducted by mean of qualitative approach through the methods of classroom observation, interview and documentary analysis. The total number of participants in this study will be eighty-two: two teachers of English literature classes i.e. *Introduction to English Prose* and *Introduction to English Poetry* and eighty voluntary second year English major students from these two classes. The classroom observation will be carried for 36 hours and there will be an audio and video record during the observation. This classroom observation will not deal with the teachers' or student's evaluation by any means. Regarding to the interview, the teachers' interview will be carried out two times: before and after the classroom observation whereas the interview of the students will be once which is after collecting their documentation i.e. writing assignments and midterm exam papers. Each interview will be audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interview both of teachers and students will focus on their definition, perception, attitude, and awareness on the importance of criticality development in literature classroom. All the research participants' interview in this research will be highly confidential and anonymised and there will not be any references to the organizational and place name in it.

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the researcher, Ms. Pornrawee Thunnilithet at [pt29@soton.ac.uk](mailto:pt29@soton.ac.uk)

## Appendix D: Consent form for teachers



### Consent Form for Teachers

**Title of Research:** Approaches to Criticality Development in English Literature  
**Classroom:** A Case Study in Thai University

**Name of Researcher:** Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet

I have read and understood the information sheet about the project and agree with the following statements.

I have been given the opportunity to ask any additional questions that I have had about the research project and what I am expected to do and these questions have been answered by the researcher who is interviewing me.

I understand that I will participate in an interview about approaches to criticality development in literature classroom and that the interview will be audio-recorded for research purposes.

I understand that in any reference to my interview made in research presentations, reports and articles, PhD Thesis and so on, personal, organizational and place names will be changed (anonymised) so that I, and any other individuals mentioned, cannot be identified. I also understand that what I say will not be shared with my friends or colleagues.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the study or to stop the interview, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so.

I understand that I may be contacted again during the project for clarification of points raised in the interview.

I understand that I will be sent a report on the project findings at the end of the project if I wish.

No, I would rather not have a copy  
 Yes, I do want a copy of the project report as an electronic file. Contact me at the email address: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in this research project on *Approaches to Criticality Development in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in Thai University* that is being conducted by Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet a MPhil/PhD student at School of Education, University of Southampton.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the researcher, Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet, at pt29@soton.ac.uk.

## Appendix E: Consent form for students



### Consent Form for Students

**Title of Research:** Approaches to Criticality Development in English Literature  
**Classroom:** A Case Study in Thai University

**Name of Researcher:** Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet

I have read and understood the information sheet about the project and agree with the following statements:

I have been given the opportunity to ask any additional questions that I have had about the research project and what I am expected to do and these questions have been answered by the researcher who is interviewing me.

I understand that I will participate in an interview about approaches to criticality development in literature classroom and that the interview will be audio-recorded for research purposes.

I understand that in any reference to my interview made in research presentations, reports and articles, PhD Thesis and so on, personal, organizational and place names will be changed (anonymised) so that I, and any other individuals mentioned, cannot be identified. I also understand that what I say will not be shared with my friends or teachers.

I understand that my participation in this study is entirely voluntary, and that if I wish to withdraw from the study or to stop the interview, I may do so at any time, and that I do not need to give any reasons or explanations for doing so.

I understand that I may be contacted again during the project for clarification of points raised in the interview.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understood the above information and agree to participate in this research project on *Approaches to Criticality Development in Literature Classroom: A Case Study in Thai University* that is being conducted by Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet a MPhil/PhD student at School of Education, University of Southampton.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

If you have any questions or queries, please contact the researcher, Ms. Pornrawee Thunnithet, at pt29@soton.ac.uk

## **Appendix F: Interview questions for teachers**

### **Part 1: General Background Information**

- 1.1 Could you please tell me something about yourself and English Literature? I mean in term of your experiences of teaching.
- 1.2 How long have you been teaching English literature?
- 1.3 How many literature courses have you taught in each semester?
- 1.4 Which field(s) of literature is (are) your specialization?

### **Part 2: Perception of the importance of criticality in literary study**

- 2.1 What do you think criticality is in relationship to English literature? Would you share your definition of critical thinking?
- 2.2 In your opinion, is critical thinking important in literary study? How?
- 2.3 In what way is criticality related to literary teaching and learning?
- 2.4 What are your aims in teaching English literature? Is criticality part of those aims?
- 2.5 Can literary study enable the students to become critical thinkers? How?

### **Part 3: Teachers' belief and attitude toward students' ability for Criticality**

- 3.1 Could you please tell me about your belief and attitude toward students' ability for criticality?
- 3.2 What do you think about the critical thinking capability of students in general?
- 3.3 Do you expect students to present their criticality in your class? Why or Why not? How?
- 3.4 Are your students able to think critically especially in literary studies? Why or why not?
- 3.5 In your view, in what way can students' criticality be developed? Will teachers and/or their teaching approaches play any significant roles in this development?

**Part 4: Teachers' teaching approach in literary studies**

- 4.1 According to your teaching experience, which teaching approach yields most effective result in fostering critical thinking in students?
- 4.2 Does curiosity fit in with critical thinking? Do you always encourage this characteristic in the students in your class? How?
- 4.3 As a teacher, do you more consider your classroom to be more teacher of student centred? Why?
- 4.4 During the class discussion, do you prefer to conclude with or include the 'correct' answer if you feel they have not been adequately provided in the discussion? Why?
- 4.5 What can teachers do to create a climate that evokes students' critical thinking in class and keep it alive in class?

**Part 5: Problems in fostering criticality development in Thai Context**

- 5.1 How do you think about problems in fostering criticality development in Thai context? What are the main factors that affect success in developing students' criticality in literary study and also other studies in general?
- 5.2 Does Thai educational system that is role of teachers and the nature of curriculum affect the development of criticality?
- 5.3 Does the role of Thai culture especially the respect for seniority which has been considered as important characteristics of good Thai people bring any difficulties to the criticality development in students? How?
- 5.4 Do you have difficulties with teaching methodologies that is student-centred which intended to promote students' critical thinking? If so, how?

## **Appendix G: First interview questions for students**

### **Part 1: Students' skill and background in English literature study**

- 1.1 Could you please tell me about yourself?
- 1.2 Could you please tell me about your educational background and also your background in English literature study?
- 1.3 Is this course your first English literature course?
- 1.4 How many English literature courses have you studied?
- 1.5 How do you evaluate yourself in term of your background in English literature study?

### **Part 2: General attitudes and impressions towards studying literature**

- 2.1 Do you like studying English literature? How do you feel about studying English literature?
- 2.2 From your third year onwards, you have to choose to specialize in one of the three fields: Language Skills, English for Specific Purposes and Literature? Will you choose your specialization in Literature? Why or why not?
- 2.3 What are the difficulties do you have in studying English literature?
- 2.4 In comparison to other English subjects, do you consider English literature at the same level of importance?

### **Part 3: Student's participation in class and their attitude to teaching methodologies**

- 3.1 To what degree do you find yourself involved in the classroom?
- 3.2 Do you often answer the teacher's questions or present your opinion to class?
- 3.3 How do you feel and react when teachers ask questions or asks for your opinion in class?
- 3.4 Do you prefer the teacher to give lecture or set discussion group in class? Why?

**Part 4: Student's perception about the importance of criticality and their awareness of their own capability in criticality development**

- 4.1 In your opinion, what is critical thinking? Would you share your definition of critical thinking? What do you think it is? Do you practise it in class? Why or why not?
- 4.2 How do you think about the importance of criticality? Is criticality important for students in term of your studies and your lives in general?
- 4.3 Do you perceive criticality as developing in literature class? If so, in what way?
- 4.4 How do you think about the importance of criticality in literary study? Does literary study require more use of criticality than other subjects?
- 4.5 How do you perceive your role in the development of your own criticality? What would help you do more?

## **Appendix H: Second interview questions for students**

### **Part 1: Students' attitude toward the teacher's teaching approaches**

- 1.1 What do you think about teaching practice of the teacher throughout the semester? Does it have any effect on your development of critical thinking?
- 1.2 How do you think about the teacher's personal teaching method in providing her personal experience in her lectures or explanation of the stories? Does it help you with the problem of contextual or cultural differences?
- 1.3 What do you think about the teacher's use of both Thai and English during her lectures? Does it have any impacts on your understanding or learning ability?
- 1.4 What do you think about the significance of teachers' feedbacks on students' written assignments? Do the feedbacks from teacher affect your development of criticality and learning process?
- 1.5 What do you think about the written assignment, midterm and final exam? Do they provide you any chances to develop your critical thinking? If so, in what way? If not, why so?

### **Part 2: Students' practice of criticality in class and in their lives**

- 2.1 Do you have any difficulties when writing an essay or in examination? If so, what are they?
- 2.2 When you have questions or difficulties in any stories you read, what did you do to solve them? Do you ask the teacher, discuss with friends or read from other secondary sources?
- 2.3 At the end of the course, do you find yourself involved in the classroom? And do you feel more confident when you have to express your opinion in class? Why?
- 2.4 Does your experience in teacher training in the previous semester have any effects on your study in general? In what way?
- 2.5 At the end of the course, do you find ideas from any stories useful or applicable to your real life? Could you describe to me the situation

when you apply the knowledge you learned from literature classes in your life outside the classroom?”

**Part 3: Students' perception of their own criticality development**

- 3.1 At the end of the course, how do you manage to solve the difficulties that affect your success in study literature that you mentioned at the beginning of the semester?
- 3.2 Do you think your critical thinking ability has been improved by the literature Courses you have studied? Please give any specific experience that have enhanced your ability to think critically
- 3.3 At the end of the course, have your perception/awareness of critical thinking changed from the beginning? If so, in what way?
- 3.4 How do you evaluate your own capacity to think critically in literature?  
Why so?

## Appendix I: Resource for a short essay for the first story, *The Teacher*

### IIT students commits suicide

**May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2008 – 8:53 pm ICT by Admin –**

Kanpur, May 31 (IANS) A fourth year engineering students at the Indian Institute of Technology here committed suicide by hanging herself in her hostel room, the police said Saturday. Toya Chatterjee, 23, was a student of biological science and biotechnical engineering department. She was found dead in her room late Friday night.

The police recovered a suicide note from the room written in Bengali. The note, addressed to her father that: "I will not be able to get B Tech degree this year. I am ashamed of it. So I am ending my life. Take care of my mother after my death".

Director of the institute Sanjay G. Dhande said that Chatterjee was a brilliant student and had recently cleared the Common Admission Test (CAT) for admission to the Indian Institute of Management.

But she was not keeping well for the past one year and was under the treatment of a private doctor. Due to her illness, she was not attending her classes regularly, he said.

Dhande said the counsellors at the institute had informed her father thrice about her physical health and her state of depression.

Her friend also said that she was upset over her inability to submit her project work.

This is the second suicide at the institute in the last two months. On April 8, a first year engineering student had committed suicide by hanging himself.

**Source:** [http://www.thaindian.com/newsporta/uncategorized/iit-student-commits-suicide\\_100551121.html](http://www.thaindian.com/newsporta/uncategorized/iit-student-commits-suicide_100551121.html)

#### **Instruction:**

*Write an essay about students' committing suicide by using the above resources as your guidelines. Explain whether you agree or disagree with such deed and why so.*

## Appendix J: Examples of assignment questions

### Assignment 1 (15 Points): *The Teacher* by Catherine Lim

**Directions:** Answer the following questions by giving experiences from the story and adding your opinions

1. What is the teacher's attitude when he heard that Tan Geok Peng had committed suicide? Why do you think so?
2. Why doesn't Tan Geok Peng directly go and tell her problems to the teacher by herself, rather than writing about them in the essay?
3. From the story, who do you think is responsible to Tan Geok Peng's death? Why?
4. After reading the story, do you think there was a way to stop Tan Geok Peng from committing suicide? How? Give reasons which support your answer.
5. In your view, do you think a student can do such a tragic thing as Tan Geok Peng does in real life? Why/Why not? Give reasons which support your answer.

### Assignment 8 (15 Points): *Crickets* By Robert Olen Butler

**Directions:** Answer the following questions by giving experiences from the story and adding your opinions

1. What is your opinion towards the father-son relationship in the story *Crickets*?
2. Is there any conflict between the narrator and his son? Give reasons from the story to support your answer.
3. What is the connection of the narrator and the two types of crickets? Do they play an important role in his life? Why so?
4. In the story, the narrator has mentioned about himself joining the Army. Do you think it has something to do with the Vietnam War? How?
5. If the narrator really participated in such a war, would this affect on his relationship with his son? Appendix

## Appendix K: Mid-term examination questions

### Midterm Examination (2009/2)

**Instruction: Reply to all the following questions by deducing answers from the stories with your own reasons (45 points).**

1. In *The Teacher* (by Catherine Lim), it presents an 'estranged relationship between a teacher and a student. Describe this with your own words whether their decision at the end is wrong. (15 points)
2. In *Why, honey?* (by Raymond Carver), there are many points in the stories which present the family bond between mother and son. What makes things go wrong or right in a family? And how this affect to their society? (15 points)
3. In *Crickets* (by Robert Olen Butler) and *A Family Supper* (by Kazuo Ishiguro), the father – son relationship is clearly represented. What are the similarities and/or differences of the fathers and sons in both stories? (15 points)

## Appendix L: Final examination questions

### Final Examination (2009/2)

**Instruction: Reply to all the following questions with reasons to support your answers (50 points).**

1. From *Sun and Moon*, what do you think of the parents and the way they talk to the children? What upsets Sun, and why? At the end, do you think the children are happy? What are the reasons for your opinion?
2. According to *The Boarding House*, do you think Mrs. Mooney do the *right* thing to her daughter, Polly? Why so? In your view, is Polly satisfied with the way she has been raised?
3. In *Sredi Vashtar*, at what point do we know that Conradin's prayers have been answered? What evidence does Conradin accept? Do you think Saki is making any comment about superstition or religious belief, and if so, what is it?
4. According to *The Killers*, there is no actual violence in the story, despite the title. Comment on the use of dialogue, the contrast between the two groups of men OR the ending, which could lead to any evidence.
5. What have you got from studying this course, especially in terms of 'human nature'? Answer this by giving some examples from the stories you learned.

# **Appendix M: Pilot study analysis**

## **Overview**

This paper presents the overall picture of my pilot study conducted on 19 November 2007 – 11 January 2008 together with the analysis of the collected data. This pilot study was conduct as a mean to validate the data collection instruments that is classroom observation, interview and documentary analysis and to prepare the researcher for the following main data collection. This chapter was written in form of 'micro thesis' which means that it consists of all sections in miniature of the complete thesis but in small scale. Those main sections presented in this chapter are introduction, relevant theoretical frameworks and research study, critical thinking in literary studies, research method and data collection, data analysis, discussion and conclusion. Thus there will be some overlaps of these sections to the early chapters presented in this portfolio.

### **1. Introduction**

Critical thinking is an important and vital topic in modern education. Educators are interested in teaching critical thinking to their students. Many academic departments hope that their professors and instructors will become informed about strategies of teaching critical thinking skills, identify areas in their courses as the proper place to emphasize and teach critical thinking, and design assessments to encourage the use of critical thinking. Many attempts have been made by teachers of various disciplines including literature to integrate teaching approaches which enhance criticality development in the curriculum. The ability to think critically is highly regarded in all fields of study and at all levels of education, particularly at the higher education level where students have to expand their knowledge and apply it to their future career.

Literature is one of the subjects which can enhance students' criticality. In the literature classroom, there is a requirement for many practices such as discussion, interpretation and problem-solving and all these will provide the starting point for developing thinking, learning and language skills. Moreover, Fisher (2001) argues that literature subjects can be seen as a means to provide context for critical thinking and discussion on issues of importance; a contribution to knowledge about language at word, sentence and text level; and an opportunity to practise the speaking and listening skills. Therefore, the students who study literature are supposed to develop their critical thinking skills and extend their experience by expressing their response to the texts they read. Consequently, to enable the students to achieve that, it is necessary for the teachers to incorporate the concept of critical thinking in their syllabus as well as exploit effective teaching approaches and pedagogical practice to facilitate the development of critical thinking process in order to enable the most effective learning situation.

Thai culture is considered the prominent factor in critical thinking development in Thailand. For Thai culture, respect for seniority has been considered as an vital characteristic to be considered a good Thai people. This characteristic results from the patronage system of Thai society in which the elders always give support to the younger in almost all aspects of life. Thus, it is the norm for the younger to pay respect to the elder which means parents, teachers and employers. This practice is also due to the practice of being grateful to those who nurture and educate them. Moreover, in Thai culture, avoiding confrontation is a part of a larger set of values, all relating to a smooth social flow. It is important to be agreeable and to go with the flow, or at least to take a neutral attitude toward life. These Thai characteristics are supported by comments of Wallace (1996):

Whether it is possible or not, most Thais also believe that they should honor and care for aging parents. They value the following formula: If one knows ones places in family and social hierarchies and behaves appropriately, one will also be promoting social harmony. This entails going along with the status quo, not making waves and not sharing negative feelings. Disagreeing is a

chancy thing to do because if not carried out diplomatically, one would be perceived as disrupting others. This is to be avoided. (p.3)

This leads to the problems of critical thinking encouragement from Thai teachers and critical thinking development in Thai learners. These findings of situations of critical thinking development in Thai higher education which is partially related to Thai culture together with the teaching and learning culture in Thailand then lead to my interest to conduct this research

The findings mentioned earlier direct to the aim of this research which is to study teachers' perceptions of criticality development and their practices through some teaching approaches to foster such development in the students. Apart from that, its aim is also to investigate student's perception and awareness of their own development of criticality through the utilization of effective teaching approaches by the teachers. The main research questions for this study are as followed:

1. How do teachers perceive criticality development among their literature students?
2. How do teachers utilize their teaching approaches to foster criticality in students and how is criticality in the students developed?
3. How do students perceive criticality development in English Literature classroom?

Each main research question has some sub questions which will be mentioned in detail in the discussion of research design.

This paper begins with relevant theoretical frameworks concerning critical thinking development. Then the research design, data collection, data analysis and conclusion are presented. The findings are organised according to the research method used: teacher's interview, students' interviews, classroom observation and analysis of students' exam.

## **2. Relevant theoretical frameworks and research study**

### **2.1 Definition of critical thinking**

Despite the widespread use of the term in education today, it is difficult to arrive at a definition of “critical thinking”. The phrase itself is often used interchangeably with “higher-order,” “creative”, “divergent”, “evaluative” or “analytical thinking”, “reasoning” and “problem-solving” (Walsh and Richard, 1983). As we shall see, this abundance of terms arises from a variety of notions of what critical thought is like and how it works. However, there is general agreement about the kind of abilities associated with critical thought: recognizing patterns and relationships; applying general principles to solve specific problems; judging the accuracy of a statement or the strength of an argument; synthesizing unique and creative insights and ideas. Broad definitions associate critical thinking with the cognitive processes and strategies involved in decision making, problem solving, or inquiry.

For many researchers, critical thinking is viewed as a practical reflective activity that has reasonable belief or action as its goal. According to Chafee (1988, p. 29), critical thinking is “our active, purposeful, and organized efforts to make sense of our world by carefully examining our thinking, and the thinking of others, in order to clarify and improve our understanding”. For Halpern (1989, p. 5), critical thinking is “thinking that is purposeful, reasoned and goal directed. It is the kind of thinking involved, in solving problems, formulating inferences, calculating likelihoods, and making decisions”. Simply put, critical thinking is the “reasonable and reflective thinking that is focused upon the decision what to believe or do” (Norris & Ennis, 1989, p.18). However, these definitions were not be adequate for Barnett (1999) who suggests that critical thinking, though long held to be an activity fundamental to universities in the ‘west’ is not a sufficient concept for the modern world – it is ‘critical being’ we need. He argues that we have no account of what critical thinking really is and that this lack of attention to criticality weakens the stated objectives of the higher education systems to enable graduates to ‘take on the world’. Thus, he argues for the replacement of the notion of critical thinking in higher education by a holistic concept of 'critical being'. Barnett calls for an

education of the 'critical person' that encompasses three domains: academic knowledge, the self and the world of action.

## **2.2 Relevant theoretical frameworks and research study in critical thinking development**

The influential work of Jean Piaget, first published in the 1920s and 30s, has been a major influence on the way educators think about the development of critical thinking. Piaget's experiments demonstrated that, as children grow, they gradually develop the ability to perform various mental tasks. Piaget (1928) referred to these mental tasks as "operations" that children acquire one after the other, increasing in complexity with the child's maturity. These observations became the foundation of developmental psychology, and led to a widespread assumption that thinking consists of a hierarchy of cognitive skills.

John Dewey, the philosopher and educational reformer, briefly defines critical thinking as "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (Dewey, 1933, p. 118). More recent definitions for the term capture the manner in which critical thinking is interpreted as both a mode of thinking as well as a set of behaviours (Cheung, et al., 2002; Facione, 1990)

Conceptualizing critical thinking as both a set of cognitive skills as well as affective dispositions is illustrated by the American Psychological Association (APA) (1990) statement. The APA defines critical thinking as "purposeful, self -regulatory judgment which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgment is based" (p. 2).

The concept of cognitive skill was further developed and popularized by Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues through their introduction of the *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* in 1956. For Bloom (1956), the term

'critical thinking' is synonymous with 'evaluation.' It is the highest of six thinking skills according to Bloom's taxonomy of cognitive goals of education which consists of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. For Bloom, the ability to evaluate is fundamental to critical thinking, and the process of evaluation involves developing and using criteria of judgment. However, I partly disagree with Bloom in the way he defined critical thinking as being synonymous with evaluation. For me, in order to possess critical thinking ability, ones should not only be able to evaluate certain ideas, but should also reflect their own ideas toward it.

Many educators regard Bloom's top three levels; analysis, synthesis, and evaluation as the higher order thinking skills. However, according to Ennis (1985, p. 45), "Critical thinking is reflective and reasonable thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do." Ennis (1987, p.10) argues that critical thinking is not equivalent to the higher order thinking skills, for two reasons. First, the concepts are too vague. For instance, the concept of analysis, there is no specific kind of analysis which is supposed to be taught. It can be analysis of a chemical compound, analysis of an argument or analysis of the political situation. Second, the taxonomy is not accompanied by criteria for making judgments about whether the activity is being conducted correctly. Criteria for making judgments are required for teaching higher order thinking skills. Nevertheless, Ennis' conclusion is that critical thinking is a practical activity which includes most or all of the directly practical higher order thinking skills.

Another theoretical framework relevant to critical thinking development is that proposed by Bailin *et al.* (1999). This framework focuses on the intellectual resources needed to accomplish critical thinking. According to Bailin *et al.*, it is necessary for anyone who wants to be a critical thinker to accomplish the list of critical thinking skills or abilities offered by critical thinking theorists. Bailin *et al.* propose that some intellectual resources are necessary for critical thinking to occur and also mention about teaching approaches which assist the development of these resources. The intellectual resources needed for students to become critical thinkers are as follows:

1. **Background knowledge** – the understanding, knowledge or ability to find out knowledge about a particular issue
2. **Knowledge of critical thinking standards in a particular field**  
– knowledge of the standards that preside over critical judgement
3. **Possession of critical concepts** – the ability to identify and make appropriate distinctions of some particular concepts such as definition, implication, argument and so on.
4. **Heuristics or knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically** – strategies or procedures to think of counter-examples or to make definitions or to make a discussion on a particular issue with others
5. **Certain habits of mind** – certain commitments, attitudes or habits of mind that dispose a person to think critically (p.299).

This concept of resource is very useful for not only the researcher, but also for teachers and students themselves to examine points of difficulties in students' critical thinking development and to scrutinise the teachers' perception of the ability of such development in their students.

The proposition of Bailin *et al.* about intellectual resources necessary for the development of critical thinking can also be used as a transition to Barnett's (1997) model of criticality development. Their idea of intellectual resources can be considered as resources for Barnett's domain of knowledge which includes four levels of criticality that is discipline specific critical thinking skills, critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding), critical thought, and knowledge. Apart from that these resources can also be applied to the other two domains: the domain of self and action.

In his book, *Higher Education: A Critical Business*, Barnett proposes a vision of the role of higher education in future societies. He wants the students to

achieve ‘criticality’ and become ‘critical beings’, a way of knowing which goes beyond critical thinking, critical action, and critical self-reflection. Barnett argues that historically the academy has defined its central purposes as the enhancement of ‘critical thinking’, but today’s world requires a new mission: “It follows that we have to displace critical thinking as a core concept of higher education with a more comprehensive concept. The concept that I am proposing is that of critical being, which embraces critical thinking, critical action and critical self-reflection” (p.1). It is necessary for higher education to make this transition because we all live in a world in which individuals are required not only to engage critically with knowledge, but also with the world and themselves.

For Barnett criticality goes beyond critical thinking. It can be seen in terms of levels and domains. As regards level, we begin with skills for questioning, through an awareness of the standards of reasoning within disciplines, and work towards a wider ability to undertake critique by bringing new perspectives to bear. The three domains of criticality Barnett identifies consist of knowledge (critical reason), the self (critical reflection) and the world (critical action). It seems that higher education in present has concentrated rather narrowly on the domain of knowledge – and remained at the level of skills rather than moving towards critique. For Barnett, the notion of critical thinking is in a realm of cognitive skills. The first level of his model is of ‘critical thinking’ which is defined as a collection of cognitive skills, usually aimed at problem solving. This corresponds with notions of critical thinking outlined in much of the literature, where critical thinking is understood as a cognitive skill, and a process of evaluation with an orientation toward outcome (Ennis, 1987; Facione, 1996; Halpern; 1996).

However, Barnett’s framework of criticality is not presented as a model for criticality development. Instead this framework is presented as a map of the different kinds and levels of criticality that he expected a student to possess in order to be a ‘critical being’. What Barnett interests is in the use of criticality rather than the nature of criticality and its development in students. On the

contrary, my aim is using Barnett's theoretical framework is to see the development of criticality in students and what kinds of criticality that stuents in my study are developed. What I would like to know is whether it is reasonable and possible to expect Thai students in undergraduate level to reach the higher transformative level of criticality proposed in his framework. What I am interested in is the nature of criticality and the way it is developed.

For me, the model of intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking proposed by Bailin *et al.* and the model of criticality development proposed by Barnett are both beneficial to my research study. In order to be a 'critical being' with full range of criticality, it is necessary for the students to possess sufficient intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking development. After attaining some necessary resources, students then need to be encouraged to act on their knowledge and understanding – in other words, to engage in critical action as well as critical reasoning. As critical beings, students' bodies and souls, minds and spirits should be fully engaged in dealing with the problems of the world.

### **3. Critical Thinking in Literary Studies**

Literature can be considered one of many academic disciplines that can come closest to encompassing the full range of mental traits that create critical thinking (Lazere, 1987). Students of literature are expected to think critically and apply their critical and analytical skills to the texts they study. It is generally assumed that students who have read the text and attended the lectures would be able to appraise it critically when in reality the case is quite the contrary. Critical thinking involves the use of different cognitive skills, which do not come automatically and have to be taught and developed.

According to Lazere (1987), the emphasis of mental dispositions within critical thinking circles has provided the learner with capacities to unify and make connections between his experience to follow an extended line of thought through propositional, thematic, or symbolic development; to engage in mature moral reasoning and to form judgments of quality and taste; to be

attuned to scepticism and irony; and to be perceptive of ambiguity, relativity of viewpoint, and multiple dimensions of form and meaning.

Walsh and Paul (1985) assert that a setting that provides the exchange of free dialogue between opposing views is essential to any authentic exercise of critical thinking. Every great work of literature engages the reader in critical dialogue with its author, language, characters, and in the dynamic interaction that Ralph Waldo Emerson (1837), an American poet philosopher, characterized as 'man thinking'.

### **3.1 Teaching critical thinking through literature**

Critical thinking has been considered as one of the most essential skills for higher education (Barnett, 1997). Many attempts have been made by literature teachers to integrate methodological approaches such as reader-response theory, content-based instruction and language-based instruction into the curriculum. They expect that students will be able to develop their critical thinking skill through the use of these methodological approaches.

Professional organizations and the professional literature support critical thinking in the classroom and calls for teachers to guide students in developing higher level thinking skills (Neilsen, 1989). Because teaching higher level cognitive processes requires comprehension, inference, and decision making, the literature classroom is a logical place to begin. These skills have been associated with reading instruction for years. Now, instead of being enrichment skills, they have become core skills. For Sweet (1993), literature is a powerful tool for teaching critical thinking. It offers students the opportunity to actively engage in texts while simultaneously considering ideas, values, and ethical questions. Through literature, students learn to read personally, actively, and deeply.

According to Bailin *et al.* (1999) and Collin (1993), to encourage the occurrence of active, critical thinking, teachers must provide an environment and atmosphere in which critical thinking is valued and students are encouraged and supported in their attempts to think critically and engaged in

critical discussion. Students must be encouraged to question, to make predictions, and to organize ideas which support value judgments. Two techniques for developing these kinds of critical thinking skills include problem solving and learning to reason through reading. Flynn (1989) describes an instructional model for problem solving which promotes analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas. She states that, "When we ask students to analyze we expect them to clarify information by examining the component parts. Synthesis involves combining relevant parts into a coherent whole, and evaluation includes setting up standards and then judging against them to verify the reasonableness of ideas." Beck (1989) adopts a similar perspective, using the term "reasoning" to imply higher order thinking skills. Comprehension requires inferencing, which plays a central role in reasoning and problem solving. For Beck, literature has the potential to engage students in reasoning activities.

When literature is approached from a problem solving perspective, students are asked to evaluate evidence, draw conclusions, make inferences, and develop a line of thinking (Riecken and Miller, 1990). According to Flynn (1989), students are capable of solving problems at all ages and need to be encouraged to do so at every grade level. Wilson (1988) suggests that teachers re-think the way they teach reading and look critically at their own teaching/thinking processes. She warns against skills lessons that are repackaged in the name of critical thinking but which are only renamed worksheets. She points out that teaching students to read, write, and think critically is a dramatic shift from what has generally taken place in most classrooms.

According to Wilson, critical literacy supports the use of strategies and techniques like formulating questions prior to, during, and after reading; responding to the text in terms of the student's own values; anticipating texts, and acknowledging when and how reader expectations are aroused and fulfilled; and responding to texts through a variety of writing activities which ask readers to go beyond what they have read to experience the text in personal ways.

Critical thinking in literary studies implies that a student is actively and constructively engaged in the process of studying literature. The student is continually negotiating what s/he knows with what s/he is trying to make sense of. The role of background knowledge and the student's ability to draw upon it are essential to critical thinking/learning.

It is not an easy task to incorporate higher level thinking skills into the classroom, but it is a necessary one. For students to participate in the society in which they live, they must have experiences which prepare them for life. In order to become critical thinkers, it is essential that students learn to value their own thinking, to compare their thinking and their interpretations with others, and to revise or reject parts of that process when it is appropriate.

## **4. Research methodology and data collections**

### **4.1 Research Design**

This research project was conducted by means of a qualitative approach through the methods of classroom observation, interview and documentary analysis. This study was designed as a case study conducted with one English literature classroom in a university in Thailand. The purpose of the study is to study teachers' perception of criticality development and their practices through some teaching approaches to foster such development in the students. Apart from that, its aim is also to investigate students' perception and awareness of their own development of criticality through the utilization of effective teaching approaches by the teachers. The outcome of this research is to build theoretical concepts and practice about effective teaching approaches which help to foster criticality development in English literature in Thai context. The following research questions are the basis of this research study.

*1. How do teachers perceive criticality development among their literature students?*

1.1 Do they perceive it as important/ as part of their aims?

- 1.2 What are their beliefs and attitudes toward students' ability for criticality development?
- 1.3 What shape does their understanding of criticality development take?
- 1.4 How would they like it to develop?

2. *How do teachers utilize their teaching approaches to foster criticality in students and how is criticality in the students developed?*

- 2.1 Which teaching approaches do English literature teachers utilize in the literature classroom to foster criticality development in students?
- 2.2 How do students respond to these approaches?
- 2.3 What shape does students' criticality development take?
- 2.4 How does the development happen?

3. *How do students perceive criticality development in English literature classroom?*

- 3.1 Do they perceive it as existing /important etc.?
- 3.2 How do they perceive it as developing in literature classes?
- 3.3 How would they like it to develop?
- 3.4 How do they perceive their role in the criticality development?

## 4.2 Participants

There were two groups of participants in this research: teacher participants and student participants. The teacher participants in this research were an American teacher from English literature classes: *Introduction to English Prose* and a Thai teacher from *Introduction to English Poetry*. For the student participants, there were totally nine voluntary second year English major students from both classes.

However, I chose only one class that is *Introduction to English Prose* as the subject for the analysis. This class was chosen because I found out that the attitude of an American teacher towards critical thinking ability of Thai students is interesting and challenging to from the point of view of analysis.

The observation was carried out in two literature classrooms: *Introduction to English Prose* and *Introduction to English Poetry* for six weeks in the second semester of academic year 2007 (19 November – 26 December 2007) at Faculty of Humanities, in a public university in Thailand. The participants were two teachers and 68 students. There was one American teacher and 40 students from *Introduction to English Prose* class and one Thai teacher and 28 students from *Introduction to English Poetry* class. Each class was observed for six hours (three hours for a week). Apart from taking field notes, the audio recording and video recording were used in each classroom. The aim of the observation was to investigate the teacher's perceptions and approaches in the teaching of literature and to investigate how those approaches promote the student's criticality development. Apart from that, this observation aims to investigate the students' perception of their own criticality development through the utilization of those approaches. The observation was focused on teaching approaches, activities in classes, use of questions, students' participation and assessment methods.

### **4.3 Data collection**

Qualitative case study methods were used to gather data for this study. In a case study investigation, the researcher will typically employ multiple research methods to draw empirical data from some real-life situation of interest (Merriam, 1991; Yin, 2003). Utilising a variety of methods to study a single phenomenon allows lead to the richness of qualitative data and there is not only a single way of interpretation. These various methods can also enrich the study results by decreasing weaknesses that may occur by the use of a single research method. The primary methods of data collection in this study

were semi-structured interviews, classroom observation field notes, and documentary data such as quizzes and midterm exam papers.

#### **4.3.1 *Classroom observations and field notes***

In order to achieve the realistic scenario of classroom atmosphere and teaching/learning practice, classroom observation was exploited as one of the main data collection methods in this study. The observations were carried out to provide description of the context as well as accounts of specific incidents and behaviours that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. The type of observation used in the research is the 'observer as participant' in which the activities of observer are known to the classroom but he or she does not participate in those activities (Merriam, 1998). This means that my presence was known to the classroom as a researcher, but I did not participate in any classroom activities. The observations were carried out for two sessions (six hours) and there was an audio recording during the observation. After that, each observation was transcribed verbatim. During the classroom observations, what was observed was recorded in the field notes such as the role of the participants, activities and interaction in class, including some direct quotations and non verbal movements. The format for writing field notes in this pilot study consisted of five parts: timeline, topic or task, teaching approaches, description and comment.

#### **4.3.2 *Interviews***

Regarding the interviews, the teachers' interview was carried out before the classroom observation and the interview of the students was conducted after collecting their documentation that is quizzes and midterm exam papers. Prior to the interview and classroom observation, all participants were given a consent form, interview schedule and the information sheet informing them about the nature and purpose of the research. Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. This interview was an open-ended and semi-structured one divided into five main parts. The interview questions of

both teachers and students were focused on their definition, perception, attitude, and awareness of the importance of criticality development in literature classroom. All the research participants' interview data in this research has been anonymised by using pseudonym. Thus, there will not be any references to organization or the people and place names in this analysis.

#### **4.3.3 *Collecting of students' quizzes and exam papers***

In addition to classroom observation and interview, the student's midterm exam papers were also collected in order to examine the level of critical thinking skills that students achieve. The copies of students' midterm examination in the *Introduction to English Prose* were collected and analyzed. However, the analysis of these document data is not included in this piece of writing because of the short period of time in conducting the pilot study. I had a chance to collect only one piece of written assignment and one midterm exam paper from each student and, in my opinion; they are not enough to see any evidences of criticality development in those few pieces of writing.

### **4.4 Data analysis**

Data analysis was carried out by reading and rereading the material gathered in the interviews, classroom observation and documentation in the manner used widely in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The data obtained from my data collection are 1 transcription of a teachers' interview, 2 transcriptions of students' interview, and 3 transcriptions of classroom observation. In analysing the transcription data of my study, the content analysis which is a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarizes the content of the data was used as the main method of data analysis. The transcriptions were read and re-read in order to code for emergent themes and to develop categories.

The data analysis was based on the application of two theoretical frameworks exploited in this research that is Barnet's (1997) 'criticality' framework:

Levels, forms and domains of critical being and Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources to accomplish critical thinking (see section 2.2 *Relevant theoretical frameworks and research study in critical thinking development*). I divided the analysis according to the type of data: teacher's interview, students' interviews and classroom observations. Due to the shortage of time for the pilot study, this analysis was not carried out longitudinally. I just wanted to try out the practice of content analysis in various forms of data collected from the pilot study. Thus, the application of Bailin *et al.*'s (1999) intellectual resources for critical thinking was carried out on teacher's interview, students' interviews and classroom observations. The documentary data was not analysed in the pilot analysis as I did not have enough time to do conduct the analysis. Barnett's (1997) criticality framework was applied for only the analysis of teacher's interview. Furthermore, only six weeks for the observation is too short to notice any criticality development in students from their activities and participations in the classroom. So, in this pilot analysis, I decided not to analyse students' criticality development on the application of Barnett's (1999) criticality framework.

While doing the analysis some questions emerged from each theoretical framework. The questions are as followed:

- *Bailin et al.'s (1999) intellectual resources for critical thinking*
  - Are the five intellectual resources sufficient for Thai students to accomplish critical thinking in ?
  - If so, which one(s) is the most vital resources for Thai students?
  - If not, which resource(s) needs for Thai students in particular?
- *Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality development:*
  - Do teachers attempt to encourage students' criticality development across the three domains?
  - If so, to what extent and in which way are they doing it? If not, why?
  - Is it possible for the students in Thai context to develop their criticality across the three domains?

## 4.5 Results

### 4.5.1 Analysis of teacher's interview on the application of Bailin et al.'s (1999) intellectual resources for critical thinking

This analysis examines data from an interview with an American teacher at English Division, Faculty of Humanities in a university in the North of Thailand. This teacher has been in Thailand for 35 years. He has experience of teaching English and American literature for about 32 years. His specialization is in American short story, prose and poetry. In this semester he has been teaching *Introduction to English Prose* to the second year English Major students.

From the interview with the English literature teacher in *Introduction to English Prose*, the relation was found mainly with some of the intellectual resources proposed by Bailin et al. Therefore, in this piece of writing, I will discuss only some outstanding resources found out from the interview. Those resources are *background knowledge, possession of critical concepts, heuristics or knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind*. The resource which is not addressed in the interview data is knowledge of *critical thinking standards in a particular field* because the teacher himself did not mention this aspect during the interview. The discussion and analysis are as follows:

#### 4.5.1.1 ***Background knowledge***

Background knowledge, proposed by Bailin et al. as the first important intellectual resource necessarily for critical thinking development is “the depth of knowledge understanding and experience persons have in a particular area of study or practice” (Bailin et al., 1997 p. 290). This knowledge is significant in determining the degree to which the persons are capable of thinking critically in that particular area.

From the interviewee's point of view, the Thai students in the literature class have limited background knowledge in terms of the *personal background knowledge* or *academic background knowledge* which leads them to the difficulty in understanding the western context and language in English literature that they are reading.

#### Personal background knowledge

Ajarn Mana (In Thai language 'Ajarn' is a word used to entitle teacher with high respect), the teacher of 'Introduction to English Prose', stated that the limited experience in Thai students is one of many problems found in English literature teaching and learning in Thailand. Thai students do not have much background knowledge about life, and about western culture and social context. This creates difficulties in learning and understanding English literature and thus leads to difficulties in performing their critical thinking in it.

What I find with Thai students is that they almost have no repertoire. They have no identity that is individual to them. They don't do anything. They don't go anywhere. They don't experience anything. Unlike western students that have opportunity to get part time job or opportunity to go travelling in the summer time, or opportunity to go visit the relatives who live in the other part of the country, Thai normally don't do that. Thai are students who stay in one place. They get ideas from their family, their community, and their teachers.

(Ajarn Mana interview)

#### ***Academic background knowledge***

Thai students in literature classroom also have some problems in their academic background knowledge. Those problems related to their vocabulary reservoir which is limited and still at the lower level. The teacher, said that,

His (the student's) vocabulary has stopped growing after elementary school. His secondary school teacher has not added any vocabulary. They are presented with vocabulary that they haven't used. They haven't forced him to use it. He sees it but

it's very very passive to him. His entire active vocabulary is elementary school level.

So when you assigned literature for them they spend most of the time on the vocabulary rather than trying to figure out what the writer is saying to them.

(Ajarn Mana interview)

Apart from the limitation in vocabulary, the students also have problems in English grammatical structure and this causes some difficulties for them in reading English literature. Although the students know grammar, they do not know how to use it in a specific situation. This leads to the difficulties not only in understanding the factual elements in the story, but also in interpreting and analysing some certain points in the story as well. For the interviewee, these problems are crucial for criticality development in Thai students.

The students know grammar, but they don't know grammar situationally. They know grammar as a rule, for example, when I gave them a question, good literature question...ah... what does the main character--- what does a---what is a climax in a short story. They will not understand that I'm asking for any climax in any stories. They will think it is the same as what is 'the' climax in this story. And, so they don't get the fact that the grammar is different. So, they answer the question wrong. Because they don't have vocabulary, they can't express themselves. I'd rather thought that for a Thai teacher, a Thai teacher has a benefit in teaching literature that I didn't have because the Thai teachers can ask them to explain in Thai. Many times the students understand the story, but they can't explain the meaning in English.

(Ajarn Mana interview)

Furthermore, the teacher added that the problem of critical thinking development in students of literature is due to the inadequacy of literature courses provided for students in the current curriculum. In this present curriculum, English major students have to study only three compulsory courses in English literature in their second year of study which are *Introduction to English Literature*, *Introduction to English Prose* and *Introduction to English Poetry*. If they do not want to choose their specialisation in literature, they would never take any literature course at all. For the former curriculum, the English major students do not have a choice about their special field of study, so they have to study about five to six courses in English literature from their second year through the fourth year of

their study. These literary courses enable them to have enough background knowledge in literary studies and have much understanding in literary style of writings or the figurative language used in literary works such as poetry or drama. In the opinion of this teacher, it is not easy for him to set the literature courses to be student centred one as students do not have much background knowledge and confidence for the discussion and expression of their ideas. Students cannot think critically about a topic if they know little or nothing about it. It is obvious that, students need to acquire information and background knowledge relevant to the range of the subject that is literary studies that teachers want them to have critical thinking on it.

#### **4.5.1.2      *Possession of critical concepts***

According to Bailin *et al.*, critical concept means “concepts that enable the critical thinker to differentiate kinds of intellectual products or to analyze them in such a way as to make it easier to evaluate them (p.293).” It is necessary for critical thinkers to have a wide range of such concepts in order to make valuable intellectual product such as argument, statement, definition, appropriate distinctions of terms like assumption, argument, and so on. However, according to the point of view of Ajarn Mana, my interviewee, Thai students do not satisfactorily possess those kinds of critical concepts such as assumption, presuppositions and implication of an argument and so on. The reason of this is partly due to the traditional teaching methods of Thai educational system and also due to the cultural background of the students.

Regarding the teaching methods of the Thai educational system, Ajarn Mana stated his opinion when he was asked about his perception towards the ability of Thai students to be critical thinkers that,

Our students cannot be critical. They are not taught to be critical. They're taught that criticism is bad. Acceptance is good and criticism is bad. The word criticises is bad. Criticise does not mean to look at something and say what's good or bad in it or to say what's bad because you wanna make it better. For them and their society, criticism means you're against what happening and you're bad. You've to accept the status quo and that makes literature teaching really difficult. They can't answer

(questions in literature class) because they don't have a concept... because they have never criticised.

(Ajarn Mana interview)

Traditional Thai culture is considered another factor which is considered a difficulty to criticality development in student of literature studies.

Traditionally, an overview concept of “a good Thai person” in Thai society is that a good Thai person have to almost always be “a follower, and be conservative, patriotic, friendly, hospitality and yielding in order to maintain the social harmony as the ideal” (Wallace, 2003, p. 12). Apart from that, it is a norm in Thai culture to give respect, follow and care for elderly people. This norm directs Thai people to respect their teachers and always regard them as in a higher position, not in an equal social class. So, this leads to a wide cultural gaps of respect between teachers and students everywhere in Thai society. Thus, critical thinking is problematic when it is envisioned as accompanying traditional Thai culture which discourages critical thinking and disagreement by encouraging conformity, conservativeness, going with the flow, and not making waves (Wallace, 2003).

#### ***4.5.1.3 Heuristics or knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically***

This intellectual resource refers to knowledge of procedures, heuristics, organizing devices, and models that may be useful when thinking through a task or challenge. Good critical thinkers draw upon a great variety of strategies to work their way through the tasks facing them. According to Bailin *et al.* (1999), thinking strategies may be very elaborate, such as following a comprehensive decision-making model, or they may be much focused, addressing a specific task, such as paraphrasing a statement to improve understanding. They also stated that it is necessary for a critical thinker to acquire a rich repertoire of strategies in order to deal effectively with a wide range of thinking tasks.

According to his interview, Ajarn Mana is also aware of the importance of the knowledge of strategies that are useful for students to think critically. This can

be seen in his teaching approach which enables the students to think by themselves. In his teaching approach, he always encourages curiosity in the students because he considers it as a motivation to their critical thinking development. He always asks students questions which not only that relate to the story they are reading but also to the ones that are not directly related to the story in order to encourage them to think more about that topics and make a decision or judgment by themselves. For example;

I asked them how the writer chose the words that best fit to what he wants, for example, odour, stink, stench, bad smell, how are they different and in what different situation that they will be used? This is out of the story and all the students write it down and all students are learning more about vocabulary. This is my teaching methodology. It's open, very very open. I'm always asking them why you think the writer has done that. I said the story doesn't tell us. Sometimes at the end of the story I asked, "What do you think it's going to happen next?"

(Ajarn Mana interview)

However, it seems that the method of encouraging curiosity in the students to make their own judgement in the story they are dealing with by keep asking them the questions is not always successful. The reason is due to the limitation of one intellectual resource in the students that is the certain habits of mind. This point will be discussed in the following topic.

#### **4.5.1.4 Certain habits of mind**

Bailin *et al.* (1999) proposed that a person cannot become a critical thinker by just only having the intellectual recourses. He or she must have certain 'habits of minds' which refer to the intellectual ideals or virtues that motivate him or her in ways that are conducive to critical thinking such as respect for reason and truth, an inquiring attitude, being open-minded, fair-minded, independent-mindedness, respect for others in group inquiry an deliberation, respect for legitimate intellectual authority.

In my opinion, this intellectual resource, the habits of mind, is best explored from the point of view of the students throughout their interview, quizzes and midterm exam. However, from the interview with this teacher, it is also shown

that he has been trying to involve the three components mentioned above to encourage these practices in the students through his teaching approaches and tasks given in the classroom. For example, arousing their curiosity in the lesson by asking them questions, motivating the students' interest in the lesson by selecting the stories that are not too distant from their lives, and providing a classroom environment in which critical thinking is valued by being open-minded for the students' discussion, opinion and interpretations.

I'll always give them what my interpretation is but I would never tell them that my interpretation is the correct one. I would never be so broad, be so... I mean, I don't think I'm that smart that I can say I know everything. I tell them what I think. I accept what they think.

And;

First, I think what's important is to choose literature, not cartoon books or anything, but to choose literature that is at the level of understanding, vocabulary level, concept level and repertoire level that our students will be able to relate to. Second, the teachers have to tie in their own lives... tie in their own experiences so that, again, the literature doesn't seem so distant, so old which is difficult to do. As far as they're not interested in it's no way you can motivate them. You cannot motivate a student, if he doesn't want to. I mean, well, he is motivated to learn how to learn ride a bicycle because all of his friend are riding a bicycle and he wants to ride a bicycle, but he is not motivated to learn literature because he doesn't want to.

(Ajarn Mana interview)

However, in his opinion, it seems that the students in general do not adequately possess all the habits of mind necessary for being critical thinker. In his view this is due to some characteristics of Thai students. They do not have a concept of learning and thinking by themselves. This leads to the difficulties with displaying some habits of minds such as an inquiring attitude, being open-minded, independent-mindedness and so on which will lead them to be critical thinkers.

Ajarn Mana also had a negative opinion toward the ability to think critically in Thai students by stating that Thai students do not have a concept of learning. In order to develop their critical thinking skill, students should have to understand their responsibility as a student. He thinks that the students do not understand that they have responsibility for life. That leads to the reason

why they have limited habits of minds which are necessary for being a critical thinker. Although they may probably possess those habits, they would not willingly to perform them in literature class as their motivation to study literature is in a low level. They do not perceive the literature subjects as the important matter in life, so that is the reason why they are not eager to present their criticality in literature studies. However, this attitude of the students may change if they have been shown the value of literature in classroom. Once the value of literature has been shown to them, they might have more awareness in the significance of literature and may turn more of their attention towards it.

#### **4.5.2 An analysis of teacher's interview on the application of Barnett (1997)'s framework**

This section analysis is based on the application of Barnett's (1997) theoretical conceptualisation of criticality which was mentioned clearly on page 99 in the section 2.2 which is a discussion on relevant theoretical frameworks and research study in critical thinking development. Barnett (1997) suggests criticality is made up of levels, domains and forms as follows:

##### **The Barnett 'criticality' framework: Levels, forms and domains of critical being (1997 p. 103)**

		Domains		
	<i>Levels of criticality</i>	<i>Knowledge</i>	<i>Self</i>	<i>World</i>
4	<b>Transformatory critique</b>	Knowledge critique	Reconstruction of self	Critique-in-action (collective reconstruction of the world)
3	<b>Refashioning of traditions</b>	Critical thought (malleable traditions of thought)	Development of self within traditions	Mutual understanding and development of traditions
2	<b>Reflexivity</b>	Critical thinking (reflection on one's understanding)	Self-reflection (reflection on one's own projects)	Reflective practice ('metacompetence', 'adaptability', 'flexibility').
1	<b>Critical skills</b>	Discipline-specific critical thinking skills	Self-monitoring to given standards and norms	Problem-solving (means end instrumentalism)
	<b>Forms of criticality</b>	<b>Critical reason</b>	<b>Critical self-reflection</b>	<b>Critical action</b>

#### **4.5.2.1 Domains**

Despite of his negative attitude toward students' ability to thinking critically, according to the interview, Ajarn Mana, always tries to develop students' criticality in the literature classroom through the content of literature that he is teaching to the students. From his point of view, literature is a content subject which deals with not only the pattern of elaborate language but also the matter of culture. The more the students read literature, the more they understand how other cultures many have something different from their own cultures. They can learn both the similarities and differences in the culture presented in the literary works they are reading it. The expectation of this teacher about criticality development appears through the three domains that is the domains of knowledge, self and the world in the forms of critical reason, critical self-reflection and critical action respectively.

In the domain of *knowledge*, literature studies can provide students with the critical reason in the knowledge domain and the teacher himself also encouraging his students in his teaching approaches by asking them the questions in class which leads them to think and find out the reason for themselves.

This will also lead the students to another domain that is *the self domain*. After reading and studying literature, the teacher's expectation towards the students' development in criticality is in the *critical self-reflection* level. He expects his students to at least understand the cultural difference presented throughout the pieces of literary they are reading and then apply this knowledge and understanding in their lives outside the literature classroom. This can be considered the development of criticality in the form of critical self-reflection within the domain of self.

So, the more you read about it, the more you understand how other culture may have something different from us. I think also when you're looking at literature you're looking at other cultures and you are learning how we are similar more than we're different. When I first came to Thailand, people said farangs (foreigners) and Thais are very different. I said OK they speak the different language, they eat different food and they have traditions but they feel love, they feel hate, they have anger, they have

hopes. You know, in ways we are human. We are all the same whether we are in the middle of Africa or we are in the middle of New York City if we can look at each other and we understand that this is a story written by an American about somebody in New York, but, my God, that person's like me. And I'm in Thailand, I'm not in America. Then they begin to maybe understand that we are not so different from each other and should look for the similarities rather than the differences and we should take care of each other because of that.

(Ajarn Mana Interview)

Regarding the third domain that is the domain of the world, Ajarn Mana has an expectation that literary studies can enable students to reach this domain. This is due to nature of the literature itself that provides the students with humanistic issues which make anyone who reads it understand more about human nature, cultural aspects, philosophical issues which will enable the readers/learner to '*become a better person*' (Ajarn Mana Interview). From his perspective, by studying literature, the students are learning to be a better person, to have more humanistic value and to care for fellow man. It is necessary for students to have critical reasons in order to have better knowledge and understanding in literary study and this will lead to the development of their criticality in the domain of critical self-reflection and critical action. It means that they will learn to think critically and then reflect that understanding and thinking in their lives and make the practical action which will be useful not only to their lives but also their fellow man in the world.

If you learn humanities, you learn to be a better man. I think that's the thing we have to impress our students. They're learning to be a better human. They're learning to care for fellow man more. And I would rather have a doctor who read Shakespeare in his free time than a doctor who read all the medical journals in his free time. I'd love to have a doctor who has a part of humanity in him.

They (students) study liberal arts. They read about philosophy and they study about literature and they study about things that makes us humans –make us different from the dogs... make us different from the buffaloes and then they can apply this into their occupation or studying later.

(Ajarn Mana Interview)

#### 4.5.2.2 Levels

Although the teacher expects his students to be a critical being by reaching through all three domains of Barnett's framework i.e. knowledge, self and world, he realises that the students themselves still have some problems concerning the level of criticality. They can reach to just level 1 which is 'Discipline – specific critical thinking skills' in the domain of knowledge. This problem is due to the lack of Bailin *et al.*'s (1995) background knowledge and critical concepts as mentioned earlier in the previous section. From Ajarn Mana's point of view, the students have not enough concept of critical thinking as a result from their cultural and educational background which does not encourage the critical thinking skill in the students:

Our students cannot be critical. They are not taught to be critical. They're taught that criticism is bad. Acceptance is good and criticism is bad. The word criticises is bad.

And,

You've to accept the status quo and that makes literature teaching really difficult. They can't answer (questions in literature class) because they don't have a concept... because they have never criticised.

(Ajarn Mana Interview)

Thus it is apparent that it is necessary for the students to possess sufficient intellectual resources for critical thinking development suggested by Bailin *et al.* (1999); otherwise their criticality development cannot be expanded to other higher levels rather than level 1 of each domain. Effective teaching approaches and characteristics of teachers in being critical are required as a way to foster criticality development in students as he stated that

If the teacher doesn't think critically, how can they teach the students to think critically? If the teacher is afraid of his own idea, how can he make the students confident of their own ideas?

(Ajarn Mana Interview)

However, it can be seen that Ajarn Mana tries his best in his teaching approaches in order to link the three domains together by providing them with

sufficient knowledge in literature classes, encourage them to reflect their own thoughts and reasons in what they have learnt and finally to take some actions or practices which will be useful not only for themselves but also to their fellow men and the world as a whole. His attempt to use effective teaching approaches to encourage critical thinking in his literature classroom can be seen in the following section of classroom observation analysis.

#### **4.5.3 Analysis of Classroom observation**

The observation was carried in a literature classroom: *Introduction to English Prose* for one week (6 hours) in the second semester of academic year 2007 at Faculty of Humanities, in a public university in Thailand. The aim of observation is to investigate the teacher's practice and approaches in the teaching of literature and to investigate how those approaches promote the student's criticality development. Apart from that, this observation aims to investigate the students' practice for their own criticality development through the utilisation of those approaches. This observation was carried out to provide description of the context as well as accounts of specific incidents and behaviours that can be used as reference points for subsequent interviews. The focus of this observation was on teaching approaches, activities in classes, use of questions, students' participation and assessment methods.

##### **4.5.3.1 Teaching approaches**

The main teaching approach for the teacher, Ajarn Mana, is probably lecturing as he mainly gave lecture to the class. However, through the lectures, he also asked students questions related to the story. At the early beginning of the session, he tried to ask the students some questions that need the analytical answers with an aim to promote analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of idea among the students. Nonetheless, not many students answer the questions during the first half of the session. They always answer just the questions that need the factual answer like yes, no and so on.

Ajarn Mana: Okay, today, *Mother in Manville*. I want to talk about two things in this story and I want you to talk about them, not me. What is the first thing that we notice about the story? What did I tell you already?

Students: Places

Ajarn Mana: No, not place. The first thing...

Students: Title

Ajarn Mana: Title. The first thing we notice is the title. And I told you already that the title is a signal from the writer like a road sign directing us drive our cars to the right or left. He tells us what to look for in the story. Look at the title of this story. What seems strange about this title? Hmm? What seems strange about the title?

Students: (silent)

(Introduction to Prose – 13 Dec 2007)

Later on, he changed his main teaching practice from questioning to giving lectures, but still keeps asking some questions to the students. In his lecture, he always inserted his own experience to the story and tried to link the story to the students' daily lives so that the students can share the feeling and experience with the character in the story. He did not teach only what appears in the lesson, but he also taught the students about life by telling them the experiences in his life related to the students own experience in that story. This is a good practice to the students who has limited background knowledge and experience in western culture. The evidence for this can be seen in the following extract:

Ajarn Mana: When I was sixteen and I was in high school, in the text book, they have Romeo and Juliet. They want us to read Shakespeare. They

want us to experience Shakespeare. I read Romeo and Juliet and I

didn't like it. I thought Romeo and Juliet was a story about love. Is it?

No, it isn't about love.

.....

It's a story about communication between parents and students.

Normal things, teenagers in all ages. Teenagers from the time of

Shakespeare till present think that their parents are old fashioned.

You think that your parents are old fashioned and your children will you are old fashioned.

....

We are all human. If you like David, or like Romeo, expect your parents to understand you. Maybe they would... If you want to do something, you should go to your parents and explain to them your reasons and you have good reasons and if your parents are good parents they will listen to you. The roles of parent are not to prohibit their children from doing anything. The role of the good parents is to protect their children when they think that their children are doing a mistake, but your parent cannot protect you if you never talk to them.

*(Observation 3 -Introduction to English Prose, 14 Dec 2007)*

From the interview with the students, they admitted that they like the way he used this teaching approach as it enables them to perceive more vividly about what is going on in the story and how the characters from different cultural backgrounds are thinking about each specific situation.

#### **4.5.3.2 Activities in classes**

Due to the large number of 53 students in the class, there were not many opportunities for the teacher to conduct the activities such as classroom presentation or group discussion. The class went on mainly by means of lecturing.

#### **4.5.3.3 Use of questions by teachers**

According to Christenbury and Kelly (1993), questioning in any classroom can 1) provide students with an opportunity to find out what they think by hearing what they say, 2) allow students to explore topics and argues point of view, 3) allow students to function as experts, 4) give students the opportunity to interact among themselves, and 5) give the teacher immediate information about student comprehension and learning. From my observation, the teacher tried to ask questions to enable all the five advantages of questioning to his students. However, the feedback he got was always the silence from the students. This is probably due to the students' weak language skills which lead to the problems in text interpretation that discourage students to give response or participate in teacher's questions in classroom. However, Ajarn

Mana always tried to ask the students with questions that encourage them to think about the answer and was always patient to encourage them to answer without the fear or embarrassment from giving the incorrect answer in the way he said:

Ajarn Mana: Yes, title. The first thing we notice is the title. And I told you already that the title is a signal from the writer like a road sign directing us drive our cars to the right or left. He tells us what to look for in the story. Look at the title of this story. What seems strange about this title? Hmm ? What seems strange about the title?

Students: (silent)

Ajarn Mana: Don't be afraid to be wrong. You can be wrong or right. Remember I told you it's not whether you are wrong or you are correct that is important. What is important is that you think about the element of the story while you're reading. You are not reading for reading comprehension. That's why you get two points, three points on your test...because you are reading for fact. But when we read literature, we read to think why did the writer write this? Why did the writer choose this word? Why did the writer choose the person to be a woman, to be a man, to be young, or to old. Why did the writer choose this title? Because everything in the story is fiction, is made, is not real. Everything! Everything is made by the writer and is not easy to write. He has to think very clearly, very carefully to communicate his idea. What is he communicating in this title?

Students: (silent)

Ajarn Mana: Okay. Does everybody in this class have a mother?

Students: Yes, yes.

Ajarn Mana: Listen carefully. I ask a question that's my job. You answer a question, that's your job. If you look at me and say nothing, I don't understand. So, again...do you have a mother?

Students: Yes

*(Observation 2 -Introduction to English Prose, 13 Dec 2007)*

#### **4.5.3.4 Students' participation**

Apart from not often answering the questions, the students also did not participate much in class. It seems that most of them kept studying passively by just listening and jotting down what the teacher gave to them in the lecture.

Generally, the students answer the questions altogether to avoid being outstanding in class and avoid being embarrassed by answering the wrong answer. However, there were just few of them who answered the question individually but in a tone indicating a lack of confidence. During the two hours session, none of them raised their hands to ask the questions or express their opinion towards the lesson. During my interview which was conducted after these two classes, one of my questions is about the perception on their participation in class and the answer I got is interestingly applies as the explanation for their hesitation to answer or participate in class.

Choojai            I think I dare not to argue with him or show my opinion against him because I realize that the teacher is a senior and has much more experience than us. Thus, according to his age and experience, he should say something right and have a correct idea or interpretation of the story. If I were as experienced as the teacher, I would certainly show my disagreement to him. If I have the same level of knowledge and experience, I think I'd dare to ask him. (Choojai interview)

It can be noticed Thai students have more difficult time to open up, think and express their thoughts. It is considered impolite for a Thai student to place his/her ideas, thoughts or suggestion on par with the teacher's. What behinds this is the respect to seniority which is a strong characteristic in Thai society as mentioned in the earlier section.

#### ***4.5.4 Analysis of Students' interview***

The comments of the two students about their perception of critical thinking and its development through the effective teaching approaches in literature classroom are presented below under topic heading developed during data analysis and the focus of the interview analysis as mentioned above.

#### **4.5.4.1 Effective teaching approaches that foster critical thinking in literature classroom**

According to the interviews with the students, the effective teaching approaches by the teacher have much influence on their critical thinking development especially in the literature classroom. This is due to their limited background knowledge both in personal background and academic background. Thus, they need the help from teacher to encourage their attention and interest in the classroom. The students admitted that the teaching methods of their *Introduction to English Prose* teacher by inserting his own experience and cultural background as a westerner into the lesson is effective in the way it helps encourage the attention and interest in the student and foster them to think more about what they are learning about.

Yes, it (the teacher's teaching approach) has much importance towards my interest in his class. CC shares his experience with us in the story we are reading. He helps elaborate or interpret that story to be easier for us to understand or to think in wider aspect. At first, I just think in a narrow view. However, according to the experience he shared with us in classroom, it helps me to see the over all picture of the situation in the story and I can think more and wider than that. Then, I can see what the writer want to communicate to us. What the teacher pointed out lead us to the aspects that we forget to think about them. We can see the important point of the story from the way he shared his experience and opinion with us. It also encourages us to answer his questions in class.

(Choojai Interview)

And,

It encourages me in a great deal. He doesn't teach only what appears in the lesson, he teaches us about life by telling us the experience in his life. He makes us see the point of view of people in the different culture that we are learning about. I think he gave us a very good teaching. He taught something that we don't know and then we can know the idea and attitude of people in different country and different culture. I can know the ways Americans think which is different from that of Thai. His teaching methodology in sharing his experience about the situation in the story to the student makes us feel more participating with him and with the story. It's fun to study with him. I can understand more about the story after listening to his experience related to

the story that he shares with us. Although, sometimes he didn't explain much about the story itself, I can understand the story pretty well. He teaches us to be more eager to talk, to think and to act which I think these are the essential characteristics of anyone who study language. So, now, I start to answer the questions more and more without worrying that it will a right or wrong answer. I no longer care much about it.

(Manee Interview)

However, despite the effort of the teacher in trying to use effective teaching approaches in his literature classroom to encourage the interest and critical thinking in the students, there are also some unavoidable problems that hinder such development in the classroom. That problem is the characteristics of Thai students themselves. Wallace (2003) argues that Thai students are almost always to be "a follower, and be conservative, patriotic, friendly, hospitably and yielding in order to maintain the social harmony as the ideal" (p.12). The norm of Thai culture to give respect, follow and care for elderly people is also a great influence towards the studying habit of Thai students as they always pay respect and regard their teachers as in a higher position and dare not to ask or confront whatever they said in classroom.

He is kind and lovely. However, as being Thai students, we are afraid to answer the questions for fear that the answers might be wrong and we will feel embarrassed in class.

(Choojai interview)

From the extract above, we can see that 'peer pressure' is another problem that occurs among Thai students in general. When asked about why they did not try to answer the questions in class, the students admitted that they feel embarrassed towards their classmates. The practice of being 'submissive', 'humble' and 'not being outstanding' among friends prevail over Thai students.

Sometimes we don't answer because we don't want to be outstanding in class. We don't want our friends to feel that we are much smarter than them and then they will not like us. In general, I don't see many students answers the questions in class. By the way, in my class some students keep answering the questions. The teacher himself also encourages the students to answer his questions all the time by keeps asking questions and opinion from the students.

According to these characteristics, they do not want to express their opinion, to ask or to answer questions in class so that they will be different and be outstanding from their classmate in general. Thus, this characteristic can be considered as one of the factors that hinders the development of critical thinking in Thai students.

#### ***4.5.4.2 Perception and conception on critical thinking***

One of the questions I asked the students is how conscious they were of being critical thinker in literature classroom, and about their strengths and weaknesses as critical thinker. The aim of these questions is to provide the students with opportunities to reflect on their perception and conception of critical thinking. The students' comments are grouped as follows: the nature of critical thinking, the importance of critical thinking in literature classroom, and the development of critical thinking during study English literature:

##### *1. The nature of critical thinking*

For the first student, critical thinking means having different opinion in a certain things. The different aspects emerged from thinking critically will thus lead to some new ideas or opinion. For the second student, critical thinking means understanding, analysing and giving reasons for what she thinks. This student perceives that thinking critically should lead to some new practices or opinions related to that subject. However, for her, critical thinking could either lead the thinkers to some new ideas or just reinforce the ideas that already existed. Apart from that both of them agree that criticality also related to adaptability and the practicalities of action and problem solving as shown in the students' comments as follow:

I have more idea that critical thinking helps us to think step by step and this way then will help us in daily life especially in problem solving. It can help us in solving personal problems, social problems and so on. If we cannot think critically and think

reasonably, we cannot solve these problems at all. We have to think about the causes of the problem and then think about the result that will follow in order to find the way out. Then, we have to think critically and think step by step to solve that problem. That's why I think critical thinking can be used in problem solving in everyday life. It can be used not only for myself but also for the society and the world outside.

(Manee Interview)

It seems that the students' perception of the importance of criticality reaches through the third domain of criticality proposed by Barnett (1997) which is the domain of the world. According to Barnett, being a critical thinker, a person should not only have reflection for themselves, but also should perform some beneficial actions for the world they live in.

## *2. The importance of critical thinking in literature classroom*

The students perceive the importance of critical thinking in their study as both of the students agree that critical thinking is 'very' important for students both in term of their studies and their lives in general. They admitted that it is necessary for students to have critical thinking not only in studying literary subjects but also every subject in general. Choojai, one of the students, stated clearly that

It's necessary to have critical thinking as we have to think in our daily lives. We have to think every day. Most of all, we have to use of thinking in every subject that we're studying. We have to think critically and analytically in almost all subjects. The more we can think critically, as I told you, the more we can get new ideas and meet new good things in life. It will lead us to the wider interpretation and meaning of things. It doesn't stop in just one point or one aspect of idea.

(Choojai Interview)

Regarding to the question about the importance of criticality in literary study, one student perceived that its use is more required in literary study than other subjects in general according to the nature and characteristics of literary work itself. They have to think more when reading literature and the more we think the more they can conclude all of their thoughts and ideas and analyse them

critically. It can be seen that the students perceive criticality as an important factor in their study especially in the literary classroom.

### *3. The development of critical thinking during study English literature*

When asked about the perception of their critical thinking development in during study English literature, both of the students admitted that their critical thinking skills have been developed from attending literature classes. They were enabled to take a more unbiased approached in their study, looking at all angles and considering a wider scope. They were conscious of thinking skills in all their subjects with a more focus on literary subjects. They turned to think more systematically over issues and had wider point of view towards every aspect of life.

One of the students said that:

Thus, for me, critical thinking is important for life. We can use it in real life. We can use it to improve or solve some problems in life. All in all, it makes to perceive the world in a wider perspective.

(Choojai Interview)

We can see that the students perceived that they can learn to think more from literature subject. They can practise their critical thinking through reading literature and through the effective teaching approaches of the teacher. They know how to think analytically and know how to practically apply this kind of thinking toward their lives. Above all, they can perceive the importance of criticality by themselves through their own practice and their own experience. For example, Choojai told me that reading stories in literature classes enabled her to practise thinking more critically not only about the issues raised in the story but also about her own life. When she faced any problems in life, she could think well in finding the solution by compare and reflect it from what she found in the stories she had studied. Thus we can see that students realise the essential of being critical in their real life outside the academic world through the study of literature.

#### **4.5.4.3 Conceptualisation of intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking found in the students**

##### *1. Background knowledge*

According to the interview, I found out that students are not confident enough in their background knowledge in literary study although they had taken the *Introduction to English Literature* class in their first semester. They do not have enough background knowledge in term of *personal background knowledge* and *academic background knowledge*. This leads them to the difficulty not only in term of English language itself but also in term of cultural background knowledge necessary for read and understanding literature in western context.

##### *Academic Background Knowledge*

In term of academic background knowledge, students realized that they have difficulties in vocabulary, grammatical structure, sentence structure and skills in reading and translating. All of these lead them to the difficulties in reading and understanding the content provided in the literature they are studying. The more they found out that they have difficulty in reading literature, the more they think that literature is difficult and not easy to understand or appreciate the message presented in it.

##### *Personal Background Knowledge*

According to an interview of Ajarn Mana, the teacher in *Introduction to English Prose*, commented that Thai students' have difficulties in practicing criticality in literature classroom due to their limited experience in life. He stated that Thai students do not have enough background knowledge about life, and about western culture and social context. Thus, it is difficult for them to think critically about a cultural topic in literature when they know little or nothing about it. This issues of limited experience and background knowledge was

affirmed by the students in their interview. They agree that experience or personal background knowledge is important in studying English literature as it enables them to understand the different cultural context in the western literature they are dealing with. They perceive that experience is one of their problems in studying and understanding English literature.

According to the interview, the students themselves think that they need to acquire information and background knowledge relevant to the literary studies they are dealing with. It is necessary for them to acquire information relevant to the topics that they have to study and in order to think critically about. Thus, providing the introductory course such as 'Introduction to English Literature' is beneficial to them in term of repertoire, personal background knowledge and also academic background knowledge.

## *2. Possession of critical concept and habit of minds in thinking critically*

In the interview with Ajarn Mana, a teacher in *Introduction to English Prose*, he made comment about the critical concepts of students saying that it is not easy for the students to make a reason judgment and other critical concepts such as argument, statement, definition, appropriate distinctions of proper terms like assumption, argument and so on. This teacher's comment was reaffirmed by the students' interview. Both students admitted that as being Thai students, they have not been taught to think by themselves since their early level of education. They grew up, programmed to conform to a variety of norms without challenging the same. They always quietly listen to and absorb whatever is handed down to them by the teacher. However, in university level of education, the characteristic of learning is somehow changed from what they get used to. Many courses require the ability to think critically from students. Thus, they have to adjust themselves to fit this new practice of study.

## 5. Discussion

Regarding to Research Question 1, *How do teachers perceive criticality development among their literature students?*, the teacher utilised his teaching approach which he called it as 'the open-approach' to foster criticality development in students of literature classroom. In this approach, he tried to encourage students by asking them questions related not to the story but also to the students' experience in life in order to provide them more repertoire and background knowledge which is necessary for understanding and thinking critically about the literature they were learning. The students themselves also gave positive respond to the teaching approach of this teacher. They admitted that the way the teacher tied in his own experience into the stories can encourage more of their understanding about the story and this also led them to think critically by themselves later on. However, there were also some limitations from aspect of students which hinder them to reach the high level of critical thinking development which will be discussed in the following research questions.

With respect to Research Question 2, *how do teachers utilize their teaching approaches to foster criticality in students and how is criticality in the students developed?*, the finding shows that the teacher perceived critical thinking development as essential and considered it as part of his goal in teaching English literature. He tried his best in his teaching approaches in the literature classroom to foster critical thinking development as he realised that this subjects has its own potential and characteristics that yield to development of critical thinking in the learners. However, in his perception, it is difficult for Thai students to accomplish the goal of critical thinking development. This difficulty is due to the limited intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking such as personal background knowledge, academic background knowledge, weak language sufficiency, knowledge of key critical concepts, strategies to think critically and some certain habits of mind. Apart from this, there are also some problems regarding to cultural aspect of Thai culture which hinder students from the development in critical thinking. However, in

my opinion there are some aspects of Thai culture which might support critical thinking which have the co-operative and supportive characteristics of Thai people. This can be noticed in the classroom when teacher encourage more critical thinking in class by raising the point for discussion in class by divided students into small groups. In group discussion, students are more eager to express their idea and opinion.

For Research Question 3, *how do students perceive criticality development in English literature classroom?*, the finding from the pilot study presents that the students also perceive critical thinking development as the essential element in all classes they were studying and as the most necessary one in literature classroom. It is due to the nature of literature courses which require wider range of background knowledge both personally and academically in order to get better understanding and to think critically about it. Although the students apprehend that they have not enough intellectual resources for critical thinking, they still have high expectation which reaches to the highest level of Barnett's (1997) framework of criticality development. They realise that from studying literature, they will achieve certain knowledge not only about the lesson but also about life. This kind of knowledge is applicable to their real life and enables them to have critical self-reflection towards life which will eventually lead them to critical action in the future.

## 6. Conclusions

The aim of this pilot study is to examine teachers' perception of criticality development and their practices through some teaching approaches to foster such development in the students in the literature classroom in a Thai university. Apart from that, its aim is also to investigate student's perception and awareness of their own development of criticality through the utilization of effective teaching approaches by the teachers. The qualitative method was used to triangulate the data and method in the study. The research method which were teacher's interview, students' interview, classroom observation and field notes were used to draw out the data and answer the research questions. The participants were one teacher from *Introduction to English*

*Prose and two volunteer second year English major students from his class. The research site was at the English Division, Faculty of Humanities of a public university in Thailand.*

The findings revealed that both the teacher and the students of literature classroom perceive the importance of critical thinking development and consider it as an essential factor to succeed in studying literature. There are some limitations to the development of critical thinking in the students. The students are in need for more intellectual resources necessary for critical thinking which are background knowledge, knowledge of critical thinking standards, possession of critical concepts, knowledge of strategies useful in thinking critically and certain habits of mind. However, the teacher himself did not neglect in these limitations. Instead, he tried his best through the utilisation of effective teaching approached in the classroom to encourage such development in the students.