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Exploring bilingual learners' desires in English-medium studies: evidence from a Thai private bilingual school

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ABSTRACT

The last two decades have seen huge changes in the focus of English language education in non-Anglophone countries and jurisdictions around the world. English as a medium of instruction (EMI), as opposed to English as the object of instruction has been burgeoning in many Asian societies. While there is fruitful research on English language teaching and learning in Asia, less attention is drawn to the students' experiences and perceptions about using English to learn academic content. Drawing on data collected in a bilingual secondary school in Bangkok, Thailand, the current study explores EFL learners' perceptions, desires and discursively constructed identities in the EMI academic program. It is found that while the EFL students actively invest in EMI studies under multiple and sometimes contradictory desires shaped and reshaped by desires of their parents and the State as well as themselves, they seem to embrace the hegemony of white, native English. It is therefore suggested that critical and egalitarian multilingualism should be added as an element in the English-medium academic programs in Asia-pacific secondary education.

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Desires; discourse; identity; English-medium instruction; EFL learners; bilingual secondary school

1. Introduction

English-medium instruction (EMI) has been a growing global phenomenon. It has a long history in regions and societies with a colonial past where English is accorded as an official language or the Outer Circle of World Englishes (Kachru 1985, 1986; Kachru and Nelson 1996) where English is part of a country's chief institutions and plays an important role in intranational communication. However, recent decades have also witnessed the emergence of governmental policies and school-based initiatives encouraging the internationalization of curricula via EMI in the Expanding Circle (Kachru 1985) where English is not an official language. For example, at the last count there were almost 8,000 courses being taught in English at universities in non-Anglophone countries (Mitchell 2016). In addition, the national education departments of China, Japan and Indonesia have been promoting EMI at secondary school and higher education for enhancing graduates' English competency (Hashimoto 2013; Hu and Lei 2014; Dewi 2017). The Thai universities also offer EMI business graduate programs under the imperative of economic globalization (Chalapati 2007). Learning through English rather than only learning English as a subject EMI is already seen a gateway to higher English proficiency and thus better prepare students for future challenges in the era of globalization throughout the East and Southeast Asia.

The unique status of English in Asian societies is further fortified by The Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that designates English as the sole working language of ASEAN (Kirpatrick 2008). However, unlike their counterparts in neighboring regions and countries

that were formerly colonies of the British Emperor, such as Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, Philippines, and Singapore, very few EFL students in Asia grow up with the habitus to use English their everyday language. For example, the mainstream Thai education system has been in monolingual Thai and a relatively short involvement with English language education as it has never been colonized by Britain (Kirpatrick 2010). Such a context will inevitably lead to considerable pressure for this population of EFL students when they have to cope with English learning and competitive situations related to the free flow of labors among members (Saraitong and Chanchaoenchai 2012). Although numerous research studies have been carried out to investigate English education in EFL contexts in Asia (e.g. Prapphal 2003; Glass 2009; A. Kirkpatrick 2012; Noom-Ura 2013) and features of different varieties of English (e.g. Chutisilp 1984; Watkhaolarm 2005; R. Kirkpatrick 2012; Trakulkasemsuk 2012), little is known about EFL (English as a foreign language) students' day-to-day experiences in learning academic subjects using English as a medium of instruction (EMI) and how the discourses shaping their desires for learning EMI content-subjects in societies can shed light on curriculum reform in the region. Therefore, this study sets out to explore some of the forces constituting the EFL students' desires in EMI English academic studies and the students' subsequent practices to cope with their desires (as well as their parents' desires) based on school ethnography in a Thai private bilingual school.

2. Bilingual learners' perspectives with EMI academic studies in EFL/EAL contexts

Bilingual programs where teaching and learning is conducted in students' second language (L2) have become popular in different parts of the world and English medium instruction (EMI) in EFL/EAL contexts is one of such programs. Under the umbrella term of 'bilingual education', learning of both language and content has been defined with different terms in addition to EMI, including content-based instruction (CBI) (Stoller 2008), immersion (Met 1998), sheltered instruction (Echevarria, Vogt, and Short 2004), language across the curriculum (LAC) (Bullock 1975) and content language integrated learning (CLIL) (Marsh 2002) based on the program purposes, degrees of integration of language and content learning, and sociolinguistic contexts of implementation. In order to specify that English is the only medium of instruction in the Thai school's international program, EMI is used rather than bilingual education in the current study.

Regardless of differences in means of implementation and sociolinguistic settings, research has revealed considerable challenges in teaching and learning content subjects in L2. One major issue has to do with learning difficulties of students who also study the language as a foreign language (Meyer et al. 2015). Other problems with English medium instruction pertain to challenges in the curriculum design and classroom implementation. A meta-analysis on impact of English medium instruction (EMI) indicates that while EMI class students perform better in L2 English and had an impact on variables such as self-concept and learning motivation, their academic knowledge in non-language subjects lags behind those students in non-EMI classes (Lo and Lo 2014). Other concerns pertain to the availability of teaching resources, amount of teaching time, students' learning diversities, curriculum design, and classroom practices, which influence the students' learning outcome (Lin and Man 2009). As indicated by previous studies, EMI classes tend to be more teacher-centered and less interactive (e.g. Ng, Tsui, and Marton 2001; Yip, Coyle, and Tsang 2007; Lo and Macaro 2012) and focus on reproducing correct answers in English as knowledge items in assessed assignments (e.g. Ng 2007; Yip, Coyle and Tsang 2007; Lin 1996, 1999, 2016). It has been found that academic language development in content subject learning is under-investigated due to the lack of research attention on the connection between content and language (Zwiers 2007; Meyer et al. 2015). In content subject classrooms, the learning of language has been often reduced to learning the key concepts (Scarcella 2003) and the subject-specific patterns of knowing and meaning-making (Swain 2006), or disciplinary literacy, are seldom recognized.

Despite the difficulties and challenges in teaching and learning content subjects via English, positive views towards EMI have been reported repeatedly across different national contexts. For

example, Hong Kong university students favor English-medium instruction mainly out of instrumental reasons (Tsui and Ngo 2017). In a survey on Thai university students' perceptions towards English-medium undergraduate and graduate programs, Hengsadekula, Koulb, and Kaewkuekoola (2014) report that instrumental goals (e.g. learning or learning through English for social and professional mobility) occupy the first rank of motivations for learning English followed by integrative motives (e.g. studying English to enhance interpersonal relationships with foreigners). And in Japan, EMI is considered as facilitative for learning English as an international language (Hino 2017). In Bangladesh where EMI is still a much debated issue, Islam (2013) finds that students, teachers, and parents converge to the firm belief about the impact of English on their future career despite differing views about EMI's effectiveness. In view of this, it can be inferred that upward social and professional mobility from learning via English is the prime concern of EFL students learning in EMI contexts.

3. Understanding language learning and desire

Desire is also thought to be closely related to language learners' identity construction and habitus: desire is shaped by habitus (Bourdieu 1990) which 'provides a conceptual understanding of what is reasonable and possible and a tendency to think and act in ways that correspond with a prevailing ideology' (Darvin and Norton 2015, 46). Desire is therefore what compels the language learners to exercise agency and transform their lives, as Darvin and Norton (2015) put it

Whether it is because learners want to be part of a country or a peer group, to seek romance, or to achieve financial security, learners invest because there is something that they want for themselves-it is part of the structure of desire ... it is in the realm of the imagination ... that learners are able to express this desire. (46)

A central construct underlying learners' experience English-medium instruction will inevitably be that of desire. Desire is an important construct in foreign language learning. Desire is defined as both a lack/want and a productive energy in language learning (Ahmed 2010; Turner and Lin 2017). There are two traditions to conceptualizing desire: The first is the social psychological tradition in which desire is defined as a want or a lack. In connection to this tradition, desire is an integral aspect of motivation in the social psychology tradition (Gardner and Lambert 1959, 1972; Clément 1980; Gardner 1985; MacIntyre et al. 1998; Dörnyei 2003; Dewaele 2009). However, scholars in the post-structuralist paradigm consider that the practices of language learning must be examined within distinct social, cultural, political, and social contexts and hence a more fluid and situated theorization of desire. Kramsch (2006, 2009) posit the term 'multilingual subject' to explain the various subjective dimensions of multilingual language learners. In particular, Kramsch (2009) relates desire to the need to identify positively or negatively with others, their language, and their ways of speaking; desire is therefore about 'exploring various possibilities of the self in the real or imagined encounters with others' (Kramsch 2006, 102). In a similar vein, Deleuze (1962) calls for moving away from regarding desire as a lack, but proposes a poststructuralist, rhizomatic view of desire as an effect of accumulated and connected life experience. This view to desire for example can shed light on playful use of language and multiple literacies experiences of Chinese children of immigrant families in bilingual academic studies (Li and Wu 2009; Zhang and Guo 2017). Desires therefore, can be understood as people's moment-by-moment and situated interpersonal orientation and emotional attachment to multimodal texts and the trans-semiotically constructed physical constructs, values/beliefs, and subject positions. As such, however transient they are, desires project different imagined identities and may become important venues to understand language learners' identity formation and their reflexive subject positions in relation to English as a medium of instruction, and their subsequent learning practice.

In connection to the poststructuralist view of desire, Motha and Lin (2014) provides a systemic framework of desires which includes interconnected levels: (1) desires of learners; (2) desires of community in which learners are embedded, including parents of young learners; (3) desires of

teachers, including their desires for students and their desires for themselves; (4) desires of institutions and (5) desires of the state or government (see Figure 1, taken from Motha and Lin 2014, 5–6).

Along the post-structuralist tradition of desire, various desires have been described among EFL learners, including desire for white boyfriends (Takahashi 2013) or desire for pleasure and leisure (Kubota 2011). Desire for language learning is found not limited to the construction of a more capable self but can be also projected outwardly onto other individuals among parents in Brussels, Belgium (Mensel and Deconinck 2017). Additionally, the implementation of EMI in Asian EFL/EAL contexts is often underpinned by desires of states and institutions to not only remain competitive in the global economy but to also increase international enrollment and international impact. For example, the prestigious East China Normal University in Shanghai has embarked on the initiative of internationalization by increasing its EMI programs and attracting 5000 international students to live on campus (Hayhoe, Zha, and Li 2011, 204), although it is not clear what ‘taught bilingually’ means in practice. The initiative’s longer term goal is to develop 100 courses taught in English. In Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, founded in 1963 for providing Chinese medium education began to introduce a wide range of EMI courses for the sake of rising in the world university ranking, despite students’ disapproval (Li 2013). In Korea, both the government and the Korean universities have promoted globalization with various initiatives such as ‘the Study Korea Project’ to narrow the gap between inbound and outbound students (Kim 2017). In Singapore EMI has become a means of sustaining global competitiveness (Bolton and Botha 2017). Moreover, desires of teachers also stand to influence the learning outcomes of EMI. For example, Taiwanese university teachers teaching EMI courses have expressed strong desires to improve classroom pedagogy including how to use interactive activities and moving away from monologic lectures (Fenton-Smith, Stillwell, and Dupuy 2017). However, content teachers’ attitudes towards EMI at a university in Hong Kong are complicated by desires to become a better university professor who concerns students’ disciplinary English proficiency and yet to maximize gains in their professional careers by allocating their time to areas valued by the university (Trent 2017).

The above brief review has shown that English medium instruction (EMI) in Asian EFL/EAL contexts is gradually developing, and it is inextricably driven by various desires. However, EMI learners’ experiences in EMI studies that has been globally constructed as desirable and the discourses underlying their desires are still under-investigated. Thus this study aims to investigate students’ day-to-day experience in EMI academic studies by addressing the following questions:

- (1) What are the desires that are discursively constructed by the students in the Thai bilingual school?
- (2) How are such desires related to their EMI academic studies?

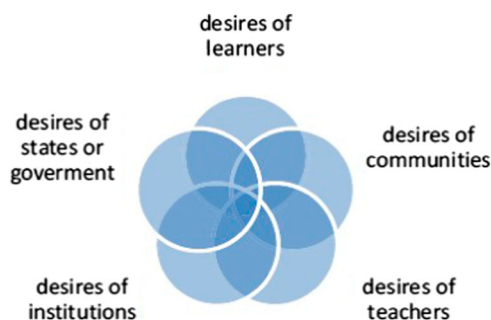


Figure 1. Desire as multilayered (Motha and Lin 2014, 6).

4. The study

4.1 *Setting and participants*

The research site is a bilingual secondary school which has two program models. First, all the students will study the English-and-Thai parallel program from Grade 7 to Grade 9. From Grade 10–12, students can choose to stay in the English-and-Thai program or the SAT program which prepares students to undertake undergraduate studies overseas or attend the international programs (i.e. the English-medium programs) in Thai universities. In the English-Thai parallel program, students simultaneously learn the school subjects in Thai from Thai teachers and then learn the same content (albeit with a less heavily packed syllabus) in English with teachers mostly from the English-speaking countries. Under such a micro language planning (Jones 2012), students are expected to become fluent in their home language, Thai and English. They also have opportunities to be engaged in debates, dramas and overseas tours. In addition, they can have Chinese and Japanese lessons as an L3 subject taught by Chinese/Japanese-speaking teachers. At the senior secondary level, all school subjects are taught by mostly monolingual English-speaking teachers so that students can attend an English-medium university program.

The author conducted ethnography in the private school and observed classes in all senior forms. In addition, the author had semi-structured individual interviews with the teachers and students in the SAT program. The students interviewed were in Grade 11 (i.e. aged 17) and would only be taught in English by mostly monolingual English speakers whereas other students in the same form would continue receiving parallel immersion in the regular school program. English proficiency of students in the SAT program were described by as ‘pretty high’ by their native English teachers in Social Studies and English subjects as they were able to write 1000-word English essays in the comparison-and-contrast genre for the EMI Social Studies subject (see [Appendix 2](#) for a student’s Social Studies textbook pages, one on the notion of national identity, the other on assessment events of the Social Studies subject and an excerpt of an interview participant’s research report). As revealed by the students and confirmed by one of the SAT program teachers, the students came from relatively higher income families in Bangkok (e.g. business owners) and they spoke Thai at home. All interviews were conducted in English and transcribed. In presentation of the selected interview and classroom data, for confidentiality reasons, all student and teacher names are replaced by pseudonyms and the name of the focal EMI academic program is replaced by ‘the program’ in all data. Audio recordings were transcribed (See [Appendix 1](#) for the transcription conventions). In what follows, I will present analyses of the individual interview data and classroom interaction data which showcase some of teacher/student everyday language practice (Spolsky 2009) and delineate the emergent themes which manifest a range of learners’ different desires and their coping strategies.

5. Results and analysis of representative excerpts of individual interviews and classroom interaction

The responses of the students of the focal program in the individual interviews and teacher-student interaction in the regular parallel bilingual program illustrate a combination of learning desires and a hybridity of identities. The following sections will provide extracts which exemplify the recurrent themes in the interview and classroom data, i.e. the desires of becoming competitive global citizens, desires of becoming a near native speaker, desires for native English accents and monolingual L2 immersion, and desires for fun in the class.

5.1 *Desires to be a member of the international community via EMI academic studies*

During the interviews, students in the program expressed their instrumental goals such as those attending the EMI programs in prestigious local universities, and working in famous international companies when they talked about their studies in the program. Nearly all students explicitly

expressed their ambitions to score good grades in high-stakes tests such as IELTS or SAT for overseas studies or international programs. The following are excerpts of interviews with Polly, Sally, Andy and Simon in which they mentioned that the program would palpably benefit their test results, future university studies and job aspects.

Excerpt 1

(Context: Polly is a female student identified as one of the most high-achieving students by her teachers. The interviewer was asking for her opinions about the EMI academic studies and English language lessons.)

- 1 Interviewer: So do you think the English writing class in the EMI program useful?
- 2 Polly: I think, yes, very useful. Because er in the next year I have to go to the international program in the university and I have to write a lot. I have to use English a lot as my second language, yep.
- 3 Interviewer: Do you like learning social studies in English?
- 4 Polly: Oh yes, I like. I like mathematics and social science because it's very useful for me.
- 5 Interviewer: Hmm mm.
- 6 Polly: That can be used in daily life mathematics. I have to use it in my university life. I want to study in accountancy and business so I have to be good at mathematics and communication skills, so mathematics and social science is VERY CRUCIAL for me ((laughter)) yeah.
- 7 Interviewer: Would it be easier if you learn the same material in Thai?
- 8 Polly: I think it'll be easier for me learning in English. Would be better because we can adapt ourselves in the university because in the university we have to do these things too. So it'd be better if we prepare this before.
- 9 Interviewer: Hmm.
- 10 Polly: To gain A HUGE advantage in the university I think. ((laughter))
- 11 Interviewer: Will you go abroad for university like your classmates?
- 12 Polly: In my mater degree I'll go abroad for sure, but now my parents want me to study in Thailand, to er know more and grow up more to be responsible for my life. ((laughter))

Excerpt 2

(Context: Sally is one of the best students in the class and she is expected to get an overall band of 6.5 or above in IELTS by her class teacher.)

- 1 Interviewer: Do you like learning social studies in English?
- 2 Sally: Yes, that's why I'm in the program.
- 3 Interviewer: So why did you choose the program in the very beginning?
- 4 Sally: I wanted to improve my English skills, writing, speaking, listening, everything yeah because I wanted to I wanted to go to university abroad but then ((laughter)) but then I don't have the chance to go, because my mom and my dad don't want me to go. They are still worried: 'ok, going there alone?' So I have to study here first.
- 5 Interviewer: So where did you want to go at the very beginning?
- 6 Sally: America.

According to Polly and Sally, social studies in the EMI program are useful because the subject has the potentials for improving their English communication skills. Additionally learning English writing is considered to be useful for future university studies. Polly's and Sally's takes of English communication skills seem to embody values of linguistic instrumentalism (Wee 2003) that posits English as a valuable and exchangeable linguistic form in the late capitalist market. The aspirations of going abroad and studying in an international program at a local university are repeatedly articulated by them in the individual interviews and learning English is seen as the most reliable means. According to Bourdieu (1977), how much cultural capital is attached to a linguistic skill is 'inseparable from the speaker's position in the social structure' (646). As Polly and most her classmates seem to position English as desirable capital that can enable them to obtain advantages in the future competition, they are embracing and reconstructing the discourse about importance of English in the global economy. Such a position is also found on the program promotion poster at the school, which suggests that they might be revoicing the school's desires.

While Polly's and Sally's desires for EMI academic studies may converge with those of their parents and the school, they are both longing for undergraduate studies abroad with which their parents showed some reservation. To resolve the conflicts, both of them compromised by waiting until

their master degrees. Different from Polly and Sally, the imaginary of Andy and Simon is more associated with future careers.

Excerpt 3

(Context: Andy is a mid-achieving male student in his class. The interviewer was asking about Andy's aspirations and his EMI academic studies.)

- 1 Interviewer: Have you learnt different essay types in the program? Is it useful?
- 2 Andy: Yes, for most of us who learn these essays types, we can use them in our lives and in exams for the international programs in universities like Chulalongkorn and Thammasat. Because in that examine there is a writing part that students need to explain about what the graph show. So this quite useful.
- 3 Interviewer: Do you like learning social studies in English?
- 4 Andy: Yes, because er social studies like er is communication with others. I think it's quite good because if we grow up and we work in the company and that we have to communicate with foreigners in English is very useful then we learn social studies.
/first when we were in secondary school\
/to communicate with ฝรั่ง?\
(author's note: that is *Farang*, a Thai word for 'foreigners'.)
- 5 Interviewer: /to communicate with ฝรั่ง?\
(author's note: that is *Farang*, a Thai word for 'foreigners'.)
- 6 Andy: Yes, we need to practice first when we were in high school.

Excerpt 4

(Context: Simon is a high-achieving student in the class.)

- 1 Interviewer: Would it be easier and more effective if you learn the program in Thai?
- 2 Simon: In Thai?
- 3 Interviewer: Yes, translate the whole material into Thai and learn it with Mr. Robin if he could speak Thai. Have the same content but the teaching language is Thai. Do you think it's easier and more effective to understand the content?
- 4 Simon: I think it's easier and effective, but but I think it's not quite good for me to study in Thai because because er (.) in the future I must use the English language as my major language to communicate with others so study in Thai is just too small area to use it. So I think English is better.

In Excerpt 3, Andy, a mid-achieving student mentioned explicitly that he wanted to learn EMI social studies for taking the English writing exam in the national college entrance examination. Additionally, the English skills gained from the EMI program could help him communicate with foreigners in companies when he grew up and worked in a company. His desires for learning English are directly linked not only to instrumental goals of having a good score in exams but also aspiration to communicating with the members of the English-speaking communities.

Similarly in Excerpt 4, when Simon, a high-achieving student in the class was asked if he would learn the EMI program content in Thai for its ease of understanding (Turn 1), he replied that he would still learn the content in English although learning in Thai was easier for him; the reason was that he expected to use English as the major means of communication in the future (Turn 4). As Norton (2001) contends in the study about migrant English learners that while participating in classroom activities, learners are simultaneously taking part in an imagined community of practice (Wenger 1999). Yashima and Zenuk-Nishide (2008) also postulates the term of 'imagined international community' to point out that yearning for communicating in the L2 English speaking communities is highly salient for a learner's development in proficiency. After learning in the EMI program from native English teachers, Andy and Simon seem to have taken up the desire for membership in the international commercial community.

5.2 The unfulfilled desire for good academic English

During the interviews, the majority of the students expressed negative self-evaluation with regards to English language proficiency, mainly in the aspects of vocabulary and grammar. Although students' performance in an academic vocabulary test given by the first author significantly improved after a unit of studies, most students, including the best students, said they were very poor in English. Besides they regarded studying subject-specific academic vocabulary for the American college entrance exam, SAT (Scholastic Aptitude Test) as 'very painful'.

Indeed, the language learning process could be rather stressful because it is not only 'a process of acquiring linguistic rules or participating in communication activities, but as a process in which individual learners are constantly putting themselves in a vulnerable position of having their own self-concept undermined and subjecting themselves to negative evaluations' (Tsui 1996, 155). While the students are articulating their desire to become more competitive via EMI academic studies, they also describe English language learning as a difficult and stressful process, which positions themselves as the inferior other in relation to English and the EMI studies.

Excerpt 5

(Context: Polly was talking about her difficulties in learning EMI academic studies and English language with the interviewer.)

- 1 Interviewer: What do you need to do to write a better academic essay?
- 2 Polly: I think I need to improve my grammar first, because my grammar is VERY ((laughter)) VERY poor ((laughter)). I think I have to expand my vocab more, because I like to learn (vocabs) to make it perfect.
- 3 Interviewer: Did you enjoy the gender lessons?
- 4 Polly: I think the lessons are good enough, but for my personal point of view, I like to watch movies. When I watch movies, I can learn some vocabs more. A few months ago I took the SAT test and it was VERY DIFFICULT for me as a foreigner, so I had to read a lot and learnt vocab that we don't use in daily life. So watch movies can be very entertaining for me.
- 5 Interviewer: What do you mean by vocabs that people don't use in their daily life?
- 6 Polly: Vocabs that people used in the past, but they don't. And some high skills vocab (.) in SAT I have to memorize them ((laughter)). It was very painful for me memorize them but it is okay now. I mean they don't appear usually in our life. Some words that even Mr. Peter did not know too. It was very boring for me ((laughter)), like CAPRICIOUS that word I didn't know. They didn't usually appear. If it appeared that'd be very academic some words, do not appear at all like, you do not see at all.
- 7 Interviewer: What do you think about the gender unit?
- 8 Polly: I think watch movies will be very fun for me. If I can study English grammar, it will be much better. Sometimes I don't know what tense to use and singular plural things because I'm a foreigner to English language, yeah.

Excerpt 4 provides a typical example of how students in the focal class described their difficulties in EMI studies. In Excerpt 4, Polly displayed a complicated desire for English and the identity of an ideal EFL learner in elaborating her frustration of failing to manage academic English.

Based on the interview with her Social Studies teacher Mr. Peter (a white male secondary school teacher from Australia) and her drafts of essay assignments on a social issue (Appendix 3), Polly's academic writing is satisfactory. Mr. Peter even commented that Polly was expected to reach about Band 6 in IELTS writing. However, Polly keeps giving strongly negative self-evaluation on her English language proficiency. When the author asked about her potential shortcomings in academic writing (Turn 1), she describes her English grammar knowledge as extremely poor by using the adverbial 'very' twice to intensify degree of negative self-evaluation while laughing embarrassedly (Turn 2). When asked about her opinions about the gender lessons designed by the researcher (Turn 3), Polly still associates watching movie clips that were given in the lesson as materials for discussion with lack of grammatical and vocabulary knowledge (Turn 4). Additionally, in Turn 4, Polly discursively constructs herself as a foreigner and outsider to the English language and attributes it as a reason for improving English. In Turn 6 in response to the researcher's follow-up question on the difficult English vocabulary, Polly suggests that such are academic English words that even native English speakers do not know and assumes that native English speakers always have better knowledge of academic English vocabulary ('some words that even Mr. Peter did not know too'). In Turn 8, Polly once again attributes her identity as 'a foreigner' as the reason for lack of English grammatical knowledge. By setting the contrast between 'foreigners' as lacking English knowledge and the native speakers who are assumed to have better knowledge about academic English, Polly implicitly stereotypes EFL students and discursively constructs the superior *other* (i.e. the native speakers) and the inferior *self* (i.e. the EFL learners). Although linguistic competence can be measured according to different yardsticks, assessment of linguistic competence is subject to implications of power, regardless of whether that (in)competence is attributed to oneself or others (Park and Lee 2013). While Polly's self-perception may have some elements of truth as it resonates with earlier findings about students'

lack of specialist vocabulary in EMI studies (e.g. Basturkmen and Shackleford 2015), the stark contrast between Polly's negative self-perception and her teacher's positive evaluation and the fact that she defines herself in terms of the native/non-native dichotomy has thus reconstructed the ideology of native-speakerism (Holliday 2005).

5.3 Desire for the first language (L1) English accents and monolingual English immersion

When asked whether they liked to learn social studies in English, most of the focal students agreed and some even expresses exclusive preference for monolingual English immersion and constructed a dichotomous opposition between the Thai medium and English medium social studies subjects. Additionally, in the individual interview, Miss Vivian, a social studies teacher from Philippines also implied students' desires for the L1 English accents and mentioned that sometimes she would try to speak with a L1 English accent to make herself better understood: 'Students will challenge teachers' pronunciation. If a student likes a certain western teacher, s/he will take that teacher's pronunciation as the only correct one. And in Asian teachers' class, they will correct the Asian teachers and ask them to pronounce as that western teacher.' Additionally, Sam expresses exclusive preference for L2 English immersion and negative attitudes towards the Thai language and culture.

Excerpt 6

(Context: Sam was a hard-working student according to his teacher.)

- 1 Interviewer: If materials were translated to Thai, would it be good?
- 2 Sam: No. If there's Thai in the book, it won't be the program. We don't want Thai into the program. ALL ENGLISH 100% ENGLISH.
- 3 Interviewer: What's most difficult in learning content?
- 4 Sam: Reading. When I read it for the first time, I usually don't understand. I will translate it to Thai and read it for the second time. And the thinking way. The thinking aspects sometimes. I can get it but I need to ask the teacher.

Excerpt 6 exemplifies how students discursively construct the desire for pure English-medium instruction in the EMI program. Before the extract, Sam mentions that he has had some challenges in adapting to the EMI program. When asked if it would be better to learning the EMI class content in Thai (Turn 1), Sam rejects using his mother tongue in the EMI curriculum by saying '100% English' with an emphasis in Turn 2. However in Turn 4, he admits he would translate the English reading in Thai for better understanding. Although Sam translanguages (Li 2018) between Thai and English in learning the subjects, he utterly disproves using Thai in the formal classroom learning which enacts an ideological domination of monolingual English immersion.

5.4 Desire for fun in the EMI classes

In addition to the desires to socialize into the international community via EMI studies and yearning for monolingual English immersion, students in the EMI program also display desire for fun in classroom interaction and the individual interviews.

Excerpt 7

(Context: Miss Vivian, a Social Studies teacher was having a lesson with a Grade 11 class in the unit of 'Development of Nations'.)

- 1 Vivian: So today we begin by discussing Chapter 9. Chapter 9 is about relation of development of nations in the world. Have you wondered why there are some countries that are rich and why there are some countries that are poor? It is a very good exemplary experience that you went to a camp. Did you enjoy?
- 2 A boy: Yep.
- 3 Vivian: Did you really have a good time?
- 4 A boy and a girl: Yep.
- 5 Vivian: I would like to ask you this: How did you feel when you went to the camp and you went to give gifts and presents and some stuff to the kids did you feel good?
- 6 All students: Yes.

- 7 Vivian: Did you feel good?
 8 All students: Yes.
 9 Vivian: Did you realize how lucky you are?
 10 A boy: Yep.
 11 Vivian: When you were at the camp, were you able to compare your lifestyle with their lifestyle?
 12 A boy: Gangnam style. ((a roar of laughter in the classroom))
 13 Vivian: Were you able to compare your lifestyle with them?

This excerpt of classroom interaction has provided an example of how students attempt to incorporate their own desires and voices into the EMI classroom and negotiate the status of such voices and the management of classroom activities with their teacher, in a class in Grade 11.

In Turn 1, the teacher establishes the participation framework of beginning a new lesson and uses rising tones and several sets of yes/no questions in order to prompt choral responses from the students. Such a structure of the choral practices is similar to that of 'safe-talk' (Chick 1996) which referred to classroom activities characterized by teachers' prompts of rising tones and 'Yes/No' display questions and students' choral responses of 'Yes'. In this excerpt the choral practice opens a discursive space for negotiation of classroom procedures and incorporation of local creativity.

Firstly the teacher tries to personalize the living conditions of the poor by engaging students to compare their life styles with those poor children they visited in a camp. Drawing on this possibility, a boy student solicited a pun 'Gangnam Style' drawing on the teacher's question related to their lifestyles. 'Gangnam Style' can be taken to mean the luxurious, superficial lifestyle maintained by some young people in Gangnam District of Seoul, South Korea, or the name of a K-pop MV. But during the time of classroom observation, 'Gangnam Style' was a very popular K-pop music chosen by many students as the background music for the upcoming school performance. Given the contextualization cue of the loud laughter solicited by the rest of the students, 'Gangnam Style' here is probably taken as the name of a song by the class, which therefore is highly pertinent to the students' everyday worlds and their desires for pop culture consumption, or in Bakhtin (1981)'s term, their internally persuasive discourse, their own words (Lin and Luk 2005). As such these students manage to have a carnival laugh through negotiating the meaning of 'style' in the authoritative discourse (in this case, the teacher's question about life 'styles' in the EMI classroom) and incorporating their desires, which also disrupts the participation framework of choral repetition at the front-stage (Goffman 1984). Although the students' pun of 'Gangnam Style' is side-stepped to the back-stage when the teacher repeats the previous question, most of them had a good laugh in playing the pun and contesting the ongoing teacher talk. By engaging local creativity, the students manage to cope with their desire to have fun and pleasure in the EMI classroom, which the focal students also expressed. In addition to enjoying the playful language in the classroom, the focal students also discursively displayed craving for fun in learning, including learning via multimodal resources and innovative pedagogy.

Excerpt 8

(Context: Katie is identified as a mid-achieving student in the class.)

- 1 Interviewer: So what do you like the most about the gender stereotype lessons that I had with your classmates yesterday?
 2 Katie: Like the movie.
 3 Interviewer: Like the movie?
 4 Katie: Yes.
 5 Interviewer: Okay. Why do you like the movie?
 6 Katie: I think it's very FUN. I have never seen this movie.

The author was the participant observer in the school so she participated in designing some lessons with the EMI program teacher, including a unit of lessons about gender issues in Social Studies. The unit incorporated elements of group discussion based on a Hollywood movie, role play, detailed teacher-guided reading and writing. When asked which part of the gender lessons that she enjoyed most (Turn 1), Katie instantly replied with excitement that she liked watching the movie most (Turns 2 and 6).

Excerpt 9

(Context: The interviewer was asking about Sam's learning experience.)

- 1 Interviewer: How did the teachers teach you?
 2 Sam: They teach us steps in writing each paragraph. They give us key words that use in each type of essay, like comparison. They will give words like 'both' and they will teach me how to use key words, how to make the paragraph (.) look fluent (.) and they also teach me how to like, hmm use the words to persuade others' thinking.
 3 Interviewer: Do you find it effective? Or do you find it hmm boring?
 4 Sam: Thai teaching style?
 5 Interviewer: No, in your class in the program class.
 6 Sam: The program? (Interviewer: Yes.) The program is very fun (.) for me now ((laughter)).
 7 Interviewer: Very fun?
 8 Sam: Very fun. ((laughter)) That is (.) always makes my heart beat quickly.
 9 Interviewer: ((laughter)) Okay, so exciting.
 10 Sam: Because I have to go outside to present to other people.
 12 Interviewer: Okay.
 13 Sam: Because I never did it before in Thai class, the presenting. We just listened to the teachers and lecture, lecture, lecture, lecture.
 14 Interviewer: And keep notes?
 15 Sam: And keep notes, notes, notes. Teachers will not give us opportunities to ask. They will end the class, get outside, then will say that if you have questions see me after. And when I go after them, they just go home.

In Excerpt 9, Sam, a mid-achieving but conscientious student in the program discursively displays desires for experiencing innovative teaching and learning activities when commenting on his EMI program experience. When the author asked him about his experience in learning academic essays in EMI social studies (Turn 1), Sam vividly recounted how the teacher taught him to write (Turn 2). The author went on to ask his opinion about such teaching method (Turn 3), Sam alluded that he found the teaching style of the EMI program was exciting ('always makes my heart beat quickly' in Turn 8) as he needs to do presentation in front of classmates, which vastly contrasted with teaching in the Thai program in earlier grades featuring note taking and less interactive teaching (i.e. 'because I never did it before in Thai class' in Turn 16 and 'teachers will not give us opportunities to ask' in Turn 13). However, not all the focal students think positively about the EMI program, such as Natalie, a high-achieving student in the EMI program, as exemplified by Natalie in Excerpt 10.

Excerpt 10

(Context: Natalie was identified as a mid-achieving student in the class by the teacher.)

- 1 Interviewer: Okay, then hmm the next the last question: do you like learning social studies in English?
 2 Natalie: Hmm, no because it's boring for me.
 3 Interviewer: Hmm why?
 4 Natalie: Because the program teachers that teach me social studies they just, talk and discuss about things in the student manuals and (.) I think it's boring. There's no PowerPoint slides, no pictures, or videos or news about social studies. They just teach in books which I think I can read by myself.
 5 Interviewer: Hmm.
 6 Natalie: And the most boring that I find that, er when finish the unit, I have to do the assessment. And (.) I think that even if there is no teacher, I can do it at all, because they only taught the things that are already in books. So if the teachers have PowerPoint slides, have news to present in the class, I think it's more interesting there.
 7 Interviewer: Hmm, hmm so you mean the assessment after each unit is already in the book?
 8 Natalie: No I mean, er the the like the content is already in the books and teachers just read what there is in the book
 9 Interviewer: Hmm
 10 Natalie: =does discussion already in the book (.) Er, for example er last month I learnt er the UN (.) the United Nations and teachers just gave me two (.) five vocabularies in the dictionaries and just give me homework and read it by myself. And he just discussed the meaning of it and how the UN is but didn't didn't bring interesting things to the class to make attention, so not just me myself but other friends they also think that it's boring.

In this excerpt, Natalie thought learning social studies in the EMI program to be boring (Turn 2). She alluded that the main reasons were lacking multimodal resources in some lessons ('no PowerPoint slides no pictures or videos or news about social studies' in Turn 4) and that what the teacher taught was entirely based on textbooks (Turns 8 and 12). What Natalie discursively positions as undesirable indexed her desires in the EMI program: interesting teaching aids and substantial teaching and guidance from the teachers.

Discussion

Among numerous narratives from students and teachers in the Thai private bilingual school, this article selected 10 excerpts for in-depth analysis focusing on students' articulation of desires. It demonstrates that wider historical, institutional, social and political factors all contribute to the formation of the desire of learning in the EMI program in the Thai private bilingual school. Based on the analyses in the previous section, two themes have been identified for further discussion: the mediation of sociopolitical structures in the formation of learners' desires, and the contradictory desires towards learning English as an international language.

The passionate desires of the focal students to learn English, score high in high-stake exams (e.g. SAT, IELTS), and work in international corporations with good English in the Thai private school have provided examples for how the wider sociopolitical structure of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005) has mediated the learning desires in the EMI program. Specifically, individual EFL learners' desires, i.e. their fears, distain and pursuit, are situated in the policy concerning marketization, mobility of human capital, and mutual recognition of professional qualifications among ASEAN member countries. Their attitudes of linguistic instrumentalism (Wee 2003) and strong ambitions for competitiveness in the global capitalist economy via English-accredited credentials are contingent on the elimination of national boundaries among ASEAN countries. Compared with adult Japanese learners in Kubota (2011)'s study and EFL secondary school students in postcolonial regions and countries who had to survive EMI academic studies (e.g. Luk and Lin 2006) it is more of a strategic and agentive decision for this group of middle-class students and parents to undertake EMI academic studies, in order to counteract the lack of English linguistic capital in the global and regional competition.

Additionally, the students' desires in learning English and the EMI program are not monolithic and sometimes even contradictory: they vary across different scenarios and respond to different discourses. On one hand, they embrace the work ethics of the neoliberal subjectivity while they yearn for fun as evidenced by their local creativity in the classroom may contradict with their desires for better results in high-stake exams. Their request for flexible and multimodal pedagogies, which can be considered as strategies for coping with both desires for fun and for the EMI studies, is negotiating and contesting the formation of English as the medium of instruction in the school. It is worth mentioning that their desires are related to and yet separate from instrumental motivation (Gardner 2010) in that while instrumental motivation is a measurable character trait that presumes the unitary and coherent individual and (Norton 2013), desires are fluid and multiple and produced and reproduced in social interaction (Motha and Lin 2014), as shown by students' interviews and classroom interaction. Moreover, the fact that only Caucasian teachers are employed to teach the Thai school's international program and the fact that parents are keen in sending their children to the program, mentioned in the students' interview embody the school's and the parents' fervent desires for the native-speaker norm of English although the school has not spelt out what the 'E' means in English-medium instruction, whether an American, British or other 'native speaker' norm, or English as an International language (EIL), or English as a lingua franca (ELF). In addition, while the students take up the desire for the identity as a bilingual elite and express hope for learning English for international communication, their desires in learning are in fact contradictory: some of the focal students are also seen unconsciously subscribing to ideologies of native-speakerism (Holliday 2005) and hierarchical bi/multilingualism (Milroy and Milroy 1999). As Baločkaitė (2014) suggests, linguistic ideals are loaded with political values. As students ask their Asian, non-Caucasian content subject teacher to speak in the L1 English accent and express sense of inferiority for being a non-native speaker, such as Polly in Excerpt 5, they are reproducing the supremacy of Anglocentric academic norms and are imposing cultural imperialism on themselves. The orientation towards ideological domination of English is further evidenced in their opting for L2 monolingual immersion stipulating a monolingual language policy in the classroom curriculum, and the preference for the English accents in the Inner Circle. In the process, some of them rationalize such self-imposed hierarchical bi/multilingualism and cultural imperialism by discursively constructing a binary opposition

between the inferior EFL students and the superior native English speakers. While the students are studying English and EMI programs for participation in the global economy and international communication, their racist disdain towards non-white, non-native norm of English actually contradicts their desire for learning English for international communication as there are more non-native speakers of English than native speakers in the ASEAN region and beyond (A. Kirkpatrick 2012). With increasing regional integration in the ASEAN region, learners of English in Thailand can expect to meet a wide range of speakers of different varieties of English from other ASEAN members, so EFL learners might get confused if they can only recognize the norms of English in the Inner Circle.

Concluding thoughts: problematizing the 'E' in EMI

Under the broader discourses of globalization and the special microlanguage planning of this Thai private bilingual school, the students in the current study have embodied a hybridity of desires and subjectivities. It can be seen that some of the Thai EFL students are reconstructing hierarchalization of languages and cultural imperialism. Additionally, while most students are working hard to realize their desires for English language and the imagined global citizenship under the neoliberal socioeconomic order, their endeavor maybe compromised by orientation to native-speakerism. At a time when L2 English speakers significantly outnumber their first language (L1) counterparts in most English communication (Graddol 2006; Seidlhofer 2011), it is questioned whether attaining the NS standards based on the Inner Circle varieties should be the sole learning and teaching goal in multilingual L2 settings (Kirkpatrick 2007). As Jenkins (2007) recommends that teaching various varieties of English taught by teachers with different cultural and linguistic backgrounds will be useful for English language learners, course components about sociolinguistic descriptions of regional varieties of English beyond national boundaries and egalitarian perceptions and liberal acceptance of multiple standards should be added to EMI academic studies in Thailand and other EAL/EFL contexts. Teachers and local researchers can establish World Englishes linguistic systems as core components in the curriculum so as to attach more linguistic capital to the local variety of English, and non-coercively rearrange some of the students' language desires. In this way students can be truly the multilingual and multicultural citizen that they have desired with a more balanced view of their local and global identities.

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Appendices


Appendix 1. Transcription conventions (modified from Holmes and Stubbe 2003, 181)

LONG	Capitals indicate emphatic stress
((laughter))	Laughter
(.)	Minor pause (of up to one second) that do occur not at the boundaries of clauses
(3)	Longer pause (of up to two seconds or above; the number inside the brackets indicates the length of the pause)
... / ... \...	Overlap (which originates from simultaneous speech)
... / ... \...	
()	Unclear utterance
?	A question or rising intonation

Appendix 2


Part C

National Identity



Introduction

National identity is the identity you have because of the country you were born in, or the country that you now live in. For most people this will be the same country.



Terminology


Care should be taken to differentiate between the terms 'state' and 'nation'.

'State' refers to the government and political institutions of a country.

'Nation' is the concept of a country with which individuals identify.

The term 'nation-state' is used for a country

'in which almost everyone accepts the state as theirs and makes it the primary home of their political identity and loyalty. That would certainly be true of most people in the United States or France ...' (Hauss 2003)




Task 1.7

Pair Work

Discuss these questions with a partner.

- How was your nation formed?
- Did it happen recently or many centuries ago?
- On what was the formation of the nation based?



National Borders

The borders of a country may be formed in many different ways. Sometimes the national boundary may be a natural geographical feature. For example, if your country is an island, there is a natural boundary formed by the sea. Your country may extend to the banks of a large river, which again forms a natural geographical boundary. Mountain ranges are another example of geographical features which can form a natural physical barrier between countries.

geographical
- river
- mountains

Assessment Events

No.	Assessment Event	Weight
1	<p>Primary Research Project – short report</p> <p>Research project using primary sources to <u>investigate</u> an aspect of the student's community or <u>national identity</u>. Short written report summarising findings.</p>	20%
2	<p>Group presentation (3 members) and class/small group discussion</p> <p>A 10 minute class presentation followed by a 10 minute discussion in class or in small groups.</p> <p>15% individual mark.</p> <p>15% group mark.</p> <p>3-4 mins presentation per person.</p>	30%
3	<p>Secondary Research Project - report (1000 words)</p> <p>Research project using secondary sources to investigate one aspect of the group presentation topic.</p> <p>Individual written project report of approximately 1000 words. 30%</p> <p>Secondary research sources – hand in documentation/or reading log. 10%</p>	40%
4	<p>Course work</p> <p>Active participation in class and completion of assigned in-class and independent study tasks.</p>	10%

First Draft

Topic : Countries and Culture

Question: Examine the reasons for the popularity of fast food restaurants in your country. Demonstrate the impact of this popularity on your country's culture.

Fast food refers to food that can be prepared and served in a short period of time. This kind of food seems to be very popular among people all over the world. This essay will discuss about its growth popularity, health effects, and its impact on Thailand.

Firstly, we will examine its growing popularity. The eating-out market has grown by sixty percent over the past ten years. According to British Lifestyles report from market research firm Mintel (Shrimpton 2004), people in the UK spent more than £25b on eating out in 2003- sixty percent more than in 1993. Hundreds of adults and teens in the Minneapolis-St. Paul, U.S.A were interviewed for a similar study in 2005-2006. According to this survey the top three reasons for eating fast food is quick (92.3%), easy to get to (80.1%) and people like their taste (69.2%) (Smith 2010).

Why is it so popular? Most people have a full- time job, so sometimes they might not have time for cooking or too tired to do it. People want quick and convenient meals, so fast food is a good option. Also, it is a good place for socializing. Despite its popularity, fast food impacts on Thailand in a number of ways including health.

Most people like the taste of it even though it might be dangerous to their body. Fast food can be considered as a harmful food as it is the main cause of many health problems. The food contains high amounts of sodium, fats and cholesterol which contribute to very dangerous diseases such as obesity, cardiac problems (heart failure), high blood pressure and nutritional deficiencies (*6 Fast Food Health Effects* 2009). How is our economy affected?

An increasing number of fast food restaurants spread widely in all provinces in Thailand; this means the local

Appendix 3. Polly's written assignment

If I were their friends, it would be best to compromise each of them fairly.

First, I will talk to each of them individually. I will tell them to stop judging people merely on their physical appearance, you should see people from their heart. People that are look good sometimes they are actually not kind.

Secondly, if you are satisfied with each other, you should talk with each other, be open minded to each other, it is alright to be surprised in what you see and what you meet is not identical to ether other., but at least you should give yourself a try; maybe he/she is the right girl/guy for you. Believe me, it is the best way for both of you to carry a good relationship, you could start being good friendly and gradually develop your relationship.

To conclude, I recommend both of you to still being friends to each other, like an old saying 'a friend indeed is a friend in need'.

2) If I were their friends, it would be best to compromise each of them fairly.

Firstly, I will talk to each of them individually. I will tell them to stop judging people ^{merely} on their physical appearance, you should see people from their heart. People that ^{are} look good sometimes ^{they} are actually not kind.

Secondly, if you are satisfied with each other, you should talk with each other, be open minded to each other, it is alright to be surprised in what you see and what you meet is not identical to each other, but at least you should give yourself a try; maybe he/she is the right girl/guy for you. Believe me, it is the best way for both of you to carry a good relationship, you could start being good friendly and gradually develop your relationship.

To conclude, I recommend both of you to still being friends to each other, like an old saying "a friend indeed is a friend in need".

Sincerely,