

# Integrating Out-of-Class Digital Literacy Development and English Literacy Practices with Classroom Language Learning and Teaching in Thailand

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics  
Department of English and Applied Linguistics

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October 2017

## **ABSTRACT**

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
October 2017

This thesis investigates the digital English literacy practices of Thai student-teachers in order to examine the pedagogical potential of these digitally mediated practices as they cycle through a network of linked social spaces inside and outside of the classroom. Thailand has been facing issues with English language education similar to those in other ASEAN member states. English language proficiency in Thailand is low and ineffective educational reform and traditional approaches to teaching have prevented the development of English language education and teacher education. However, Thailand's high number of mobile internet subscriptions and high social media penetration suggests that there is great potential to explore learners' out-of-class digital English literacy practices and the way they may contribute to our understanding of how digital media might be more effectively used in informal language learning contexts.

The thesis takes a Mediated Discourse Analysis approach to studying student-teachers' digitally mediated English literacy practices. A Nexus Analysis was carried out at a provincial teacher training academy in the center of Thailand in order to explore how student-teachers' digitally-mediated social and literacy practices cycle through and co-exist with other practices in a network of social spaces.

These practices and discourses were then traced to see how discourse and action at the micro-interpersonal level are linked to wider socio-political and cultural relationships between various interest groups in English language education in Thai society.

This thesis shows that the out-of-class digital English literacy practices of Thai student-teachers create affordances for their in-class learning practices as well as a way to mediate their anticipatory discourses regarding their future professional practices as English teachers. However, the pedagogical potential of these digital literacy practices are not effectively utilized due to the static nature of the Thai educational system, the strict social hierarchies it entails, and, the ambivalence between the ways digitally mediated English literacy practices are embedded in student-teachers' individual historical bodies and the current dominant Discourses on English language education and the use of digital technology as a means to enhance language learning and literacy development in Thailand. Despite the limited utilization of this pedagogical potential, these findings do provide a better understanding of how digital English literacy practices, which are not directly observable, co-exist alongside other literacy and professional practices in a complex network of social spaces. These insights can help learners, teachers, and, administrators in the field of English language teacher education in Thailand and beyond develop the current learning and teaching practices and their application in future professional practices.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Rodney H. Jones for his professional guidance, support and dialogue throughout my thesis and for offering the opportunity to transfer with him to Reading. It was the learning experience I was hoping for.

I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jacqueline Laws, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Parvaneh Tavakoli and Dr. Tony Capstick for the opportunities they have given me within the department, their encouragement, help and support.

I would like to express my gratitude to The International Research Foundation for English Language Education (TIRF). This study was funded through a TIRF Doctoral Dissertation Grant and their funding and support has been essential in carrying out my field work and allowed me to publish a part of this thesis as a book chapter.

I would like to thank all the student-teachers, lecturers and administrators of Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, and, the government officials of OBEC for their kind cooperation and willingness to share their experiences and stories with me. Special thanks go to Dr. Daret Naruemon and Dr. Prachak Rotarwut for their time and energy in facilitating my data collection at NSRU.

I would also like to thank Aschara Manasri for her help in translating the required documentation for the NRCT Thai research license.

I would also like to thank Professor Claire Furneaux and Dermot Shields for their encouragement and hospitality during my stay in Reading.

A big thanks also to Damian and Tracy, both at different times and in different countries, many thanks for your help, dialogue, feedback, advice and support.

I would also like to thank my parents for their unconditional support in all the decisions I take in my life and visiting me wherever I go, no matter the circumstances.

Finally, Lek, I wouldn't even know where to start...

## **DECLARATION**

'Declaration: I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.'

Freek Olaf de Groot

October 2017

# CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	1
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	3
DECLARATION .....	4
CONTENTS.....	5
TABLES, FIGURES AND EXCERPTS.....	10
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	13
1.1 Introduction	13
1.2 Research context: English language use in Thailand	14
1.2.1 English in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)	15
1.2.2 English in Thailand	16
1.2.3 English language use in Thailand	18
1.3 English language education in Thailand	18
1.4 Digital technology, literacy development and foreign language learning	21
1.5 Digital technology in English Language Education in Thailand	23
1.6 Digital technology, literacy development and EFL teacher education	25
1.7 Research on Digital Technology in English Language Learning and Teaching in Thailand	26
1.8 Conclusion and Research Questions	28
1.9 Structure of the thesis	29
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	31
2.1 Introduction	31
2.2 Digital technology and language learning	31
2.3 Mobility in technology-mediated learning	34
2.4 Mobility and Learning: Space and Time	38
2.5 Language and literacy as social practice	42
2.6 Literacy Development and the Social Distribution of Learning	44
2.7 Development of Digital Literacy Practices	47
CHAPTER 3: MEDIATED DISCOURSE ANALYSIS AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	51
	5

3.1	Introduction	51
3.2	A Mediated Discourse Analysis Approach to Studying Discourse <i>in Action</i>	51
3.3	Social action	54
3.4	Mediational means	57
3.5	Sites of engagement	60
	3.5.1 Sites of engagement as a lens to analyze the production of social space	61
3.6	Scales of time and social practices	63
3.7	Nexus of practice	65
3.8	Nexus analysis	67
3.9	Definitions of the key concepts of this study	69
3.10	Research questions revisited	70
CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY		71
4.1	Introduction	71
4.2	Epistemology: Social Constructionism	72
4.3	Context of the current research	73
4.4	Research questions	74
4.5	Theoretical perspectives on methods and data collection	77
	4.5.1 Nexus analysis	77
	4.5.2 Data collection from a mediated discourses analysis perspective	78
4.6	Steps in a Nexus Analysis	80
	4.6.1 Engaging the nexus of practice	80
	4.6.2 Entering the nexus of practice	81
	4.6.2.1 Establishing contact with the research site	81
	4.6.2.2 Establishing contact with the participants	83
	4.6.2.3 Positioning as a Legitimate Participant	84
	4.6.3 The student-teachers in the nexus	86
	4.6.4 The lecturers in the nexus	89
	4.6.5 The research site in the nexus	89
	4.6.5.1 The Bachelor of Education English Program	90
	4.6.6 Data collection in engaging the nexus of practice	91
	4.6.6.1 Participant and mediational means surveys	92

4.6.6.2	Scene surveys	92
4.6.6.2.1	General documentation	92
4.6.6.2.2	Mapping spaces	93
4.6.6.2.3	Observations	94
4.6.6.3	Event action surveys	97
4.6.6.4	Ethical considerations on the use of wearable technology	97
4.6.6.5	Legal considerations on the use of wearable technology	99
4.6.6.4	Focus group interviews	100
4.6.6.5	Data analysis in engaging the nexus	103
4.7	Navigating the nexus of practice	105
4.7.1	Mapping semiotic cycles	105
4.7.1.1	Historical bodies of the participants	105
4.7.1.2	Discourses in place	106
4.7.1.3	Mediational means	107
4.7.3	Circumferencing	109
4.7.4	Data analysis in navigating the nexus	110
4.8	Changing the nexus	111
4.9	Data processing, tracking and storing	113
4.9.1	General documentation	113
4.9.2	Field notes	113
4.9.3	Visual data from interviews	114
4.9.4	Maps and images	114
4.9.5	Storage	114
4.10	Summary	115
CHAPTER 5: DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY AND ENGLISH LITERACY PRACTICES: A DAY IN THE LIVES OF THAI STUDENT-TEACHERS		116
5.1	Introduction	116
5.2	Vignette	116
5.3	Sites of engagement and intersecting practices	123
5.4	Social spaces	125
5.5	Discourse itineraries and resemiotization	130

5.6	Tools and technologies of mediation	132
5.6.1	Affordances and Constraints of Tools	132
5.6.2	Potential and effective use of affordances of tools	134
5.6.3	(Multi)Modality of tools	135
5.7	Practices and scales of time	138
5.8	Conclusion	141
CHAPTER 6: LEARNING, ENGLISH LITERACY AND DIGITAL TOOLS INSIDE THE CLASSROOM		142
6.1	Introduction	142
6.2	Room 209 and the classroom: student teachers' social practices and the construction of social spaces at the university	142
6.2.1	Doing class: practices producing the classroom as a social space at the university	144
6.3	Facebooking, Instagramming and searching for academic information: the digital literacy practices of Thai student-teachers in the classroom	147
6.4	The literacy events of Thai student-teachers in the classroom	160
6.4.1	English literacy events in the Thai university classroom	160
6.4.2	English literacy events in the Thai classroom: "when some of them use English it's kinda strange"	162
6.4.3	English literacy events in the classroom with foreign lecturers: opportunities, exposure and practice	169
6.5	PowerPoints, textbooks and videos: how semiotic artifacts make or break links between literacy events	175
6.6	Student-teachers' selective foregrounding and backgrounding of English literacy practices as a strategy to participate in the practices of the social space	180
6.7	Conclusion	182
CHAPTER 7: LEARNING, ENGLISH LITERACY AND DIGITAL TOOLS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM		184
7.1	Introduction	184
7.2	Outside the classroom 'is more real': Tracing student-teachers' English literacy practices outside the classroom	185
7.3	English literacy events outside the classroom: preparing English for in-class use	190
7.4	YouTube, movies and the Internet: the learning potential of digital English literacy events of	

	student-teachers outside the classroom	198
7.5	Student-teachers' English literacy practices: the example of Facebook posts	202
7.6	Online boyfriends, grammar lessons and part-time jobs: a wider network of connected digital English practices	218
7.7	Sexual solicitation and presenting the self online: Discourses inhibiting student-teachers' digital English literacy practices	226
7.8	Conclusion	231
CHAPTER 8: LEARNING, ENGLISH LITERACY AND DIGITAL TOOLS IN THAI SOCIETY		233
8.1	Introduction	233
8.2	Linking past, present and future practices of student-teachers	234
	8.2.1 Student-teachers' historical bodies as a way to understand current practices	234
	8.2.2 Becoming an English teacher: anticipatory discourses on future teaching practices	236
8.3	"I think I will teach in Thai": Anticipatory discourses of student-teachers' English literacy practices in future professional practices	237
8.4	Teaching language and teaching content: Discourses and practices at the lecturer level	248
8.5	Access to education, managing resources and gatekeeping: discourses at the University level	256
	8.5.1 Discourses on Digital Technology	257
	8.5.2 Discourses on Learning and teaching	259
	8.5.3 Discourses on English Literacy practices	263
8.6	Failed education reform, decentralization and deficit discourse: Discourses and practices at the ministerial level	267
8.7	Conclusion	274
CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION		276
9.1	Introduction	276
9.2	Digital English literacy practices of Thai student-teachers outside the classroom	277
9.3	Toward a more fluid conceptualization of the classroom	280
9.4	The pedagogical potential of out-of-class digital literacy practices for in-class learning and teaching	283
9.5	Learning, literacy, English and digital technology in the wider context of Thailand	287
9.6	Moments of action as complex intersections	289

9.7	Contribution of this study to the field of Mediated Discourse Analysis	
9.7.1	Wearable Technology as a gateway to the site of engagement	291
9.7.2	Sites of engagement as a lens to look at the production of space	293
9.8	Reflection on the research process	295
9.9	Directions for further research	298
9.10	Conclusion	299

## TABLES, FIGURES, EXCERPTS

Table 1:	Overview of participating student-teachers, names are pseudonyms	87
Table 2:	Course credit breakdown Bachelor of Education Program	90
Figure 1:	Completed English language map task by a participant	94
Figure 2:	Common practices observed in the classroom	145
Figure 3:	Model pictures of correct uniforms	146
Figure 4:	Intersecting practices during a digitally mediated activity in the classroom.	155
Figure 5:	Synthesis of the map task showing the actions taken in English inside the classroom	161
Figure 6:	Still image taken from a wearable camera during a homework activity	191
Figure 7:	Screen shot taken from MacMillan’s online dictionary	194
Figure 8:	Facebook status update of a student-teacher	203
Figure 9:	Facebook status update of a student-teacher	205
Figure 10:	Facebook status update of a student-teacher	211
Figure 11:	Facebook status update of a student-teacher	213
Figure 12:	An anonymized Instagram post of drawings	216
Figure 13:	Teaching materials drawn by a student-teacher	217
Vignette 1:	The literacy events of a group of student-teachers throughout a sample day	117
Vignette 2:	Description of a learning activity using digital technology in class	153
Vignette 3:	A learning activity in Ms P lesson	161
Vignette 4:	An account of a peer teaching practice activity in week 10	169
Vignette 5:	A learning activity in an English class with a foreign lecturer	198
Vignette 6:	A discussion among student-teachers on the use of English in the classroom	238

Vignette 7: A senior lecturer describing her teaching experience	250
Excerpt 1. Extract taken from a focus group interview	128
Excerpt 2. Observation made in the classroom, group B	133
Excerpt 3. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	136
Excerpt 4. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	137
Excerpt 5. A transcript from a research interview with two junior lecturers in the department	148
Excerpt 6. A transcript from a research interview with two teachers in the department	149
Excerpt 7. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	150
Excerpt 8. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	151
Excerpt 9. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	157
Excerpt 10. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	157
Excerpt 11. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	164
Excerpt 12. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	166
Excerpt 13. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	177
Excerpt 14: A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	186
Excerpt 15. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	187
Excerpt 16. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	188
Excerpt 17. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	192
Excerpt 18. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	194
Excerpt 19. A transcript from a research interview with a lecturer	196
Excerpt 20. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	197
Excerpt 21. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	200
Excerpt 22. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	206
Excerpt 23. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	208
Excerpt 24. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	209
Excerpt 25. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	210
Excerpt 26. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	218
Excerpt 27. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	220
Excerpt 28. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	222
Excerpt 29. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	222
Excerpt 30. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	224

Excerpt 31. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	226
Excerpt 32. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	228
Excerpt 33. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	229
Excerpt 34. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	239
Excerpt 35. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	241
Excerpt 36. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	244
Excerpt 37. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	245
Excerpt 38. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	252
Excerpt 39. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	253
Excerpt 40. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers	254
Excerpt 41. Quote taken from a research interview with the vice-president	257
Excerpt 42. Excerpt taken from a research interview	260
Excerpt 43. Excerpt taken from a research interview	262
Excerpt 44: Quote taken from a research interview with the vice-president	264
APPENDIX 1: Request for Approval Data Collection NSRU	302
APPENDIX 2: Approval Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University for Data Collection	303
APPENDIX 3: Approval National Research Council Thailand Data Collection	304
APPENDIX 4: Consent form Participants – Student-teachers	305
APPENDIX 5: Consent Form Wearable Camera	307
APPENDIX 6: Consent Form Research Interview	309
APPENDIX 7: Example of a Data Collection Journal Entry (Anonymized)	311
APPENDIX 8: Transcription conventions	312
APPENDIX 9: Example of Coded Classroom observation Summary (anonymized)	313
APPENDIX 10: Extract of Campus field notes taken (Week 2)	314
APPENDIX 11: Extract of teaching practice journal kept by student-teacher	316
APPENDIX 12: Overview of Credits breakdown of the 5 year B.Ed. English Curriculum NSRU	317
References	318

## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### 1.1 Introduction

This thesis is about how a small group of 16 Thai student-teachers of English uses digital technology as a tool to engage in their daily English literacy and learning practices outside the classroom and what the pedagogical potential of these practices is for teaching and language learning inside the classroom. It does this at a time when English has assumed an increasingly important role as a common medium of communication on much of social media, and in research and education, and, when digital technology has assumed an increasingly important role in how we learn and communicate. In Thailand English is widely considered a commodity that facilitates social mobility and allows people to function within an increasingly globalizing world. English has been adopted as the official language of communication within the ASEAN community, and Thailand is committed to improving the current low levels of English proficiency in the country. Digital technology also plays an important role in Thailand, with most of the internet access going through mobile devices and more than half of Thai people reporting being active users of social media. A growing body of research argues that the use of digital technology can create affordances for (English) language learning and literacy development outside the classroom (Black, 2008; Gee, 2004; Lam 2009, Lam and Rosario-Ramos, 2009, Thorne, Black and Sykes, 2009). However, it seems that in Thailand, despite the government's commitment to improving English language proficiency levels, this widespread use of digital technology in people's social and learning routines has not materialized into higher levels of English language proficiency as measured by national and international standardized language proficiency tests.

The aim of this thesis is to better understand English literacy development and language learning in Thailand as it intersects with the way learners use digital technology. Rather than measuring the effectiveness of particular tools or applications for language learning in controlled environments, it tries to better understand how digital technology affects the way people learn English and develop

English literacy skills as part of their day-to-day learning and social practices. In other words, it explores the opportunities that digital technology creates for learners, the constraints these tools impose on learning, and the extent these affordances and constraints are capitalized upon when learners engage in their day-to-day social, learning and literacy practices that involve the use of English. Mobility is one of the most important affordances of digital technology at the moment, allowing us to engage in our digital social and literacy practices wherever and whenever we want and to interact with communities that are not within direct physical reach, offering great potential for learners in environments such as Thailand in which exposure to English is generally scarce. This thesis, therefore, is as much about digital technology, language learning and literacy development as it is about notions of social space and how technology allows us to engage in these literacy practices when possibilities for configuring social space have been altered.

This introductory chapter will start with a discussion of the role of English in Thailand in general and Thai education in particular. I will then discuss how digital technology creates benefits for language learning inside and outside the classroom in Thailand. I will round up this chapter by arguing that in the present context of low English language proficiency levels in Thailand, there is a lack of understanding about the ways digital technology influences language learning outside the classroom and how this relates to English language learning and teaching that takes place in the classroom. This chapter will end by formulating three research questions that will inform the discussion of the theoretical framework in chapter 2.

## 1.2 Research context: English language use in Thailand

Despite a commitment to improve English language proficiency levels in Thailand, they still rank among the lowest within the ASEAN community. This section will provide a brief overview of English

language use and education in Thailand and discuss some of the common issues pointed out by the current body of research.

### 1.2.1 English in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

The English language has played an important role in the ASEAN region right from its start in 1967. Despite the linguistic diversity represented within the individual ASEAN member states (Smalley, 1994), English has been adopted as the working or common language of the ASEAN community without any formal statement or documentation (Okudaira, 1999). Okudaira argues that the adoption of English was a result of an implicit shared understanding by all member states and this decision has gone unchallenged despite the fact that the language is not officially spoken in any of the member states as a first language. All ASEAN member states actively articulate the benefits of English language proficiency to their citizens and see it as important to their future development. Proficiency in English is widely seen to contribute to the social mobility of people within the ASEAN community in an increasingly globalizing world (Rappa and Wee, 2006). However, despite this widespread perception of the importance of English, English language proficiency levels remain low for the majority of ASEAN member states. TOEFL iBT scores in the majority of the countries range between 66 and 80 for countries such as Lao, Brunei, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam, with the exception of The Philippines, Malaysia and Singapore, which outperform the other member states with scores ranging from 89, 90 to 96 respectively (ETS: TOEFL iBT, 2016). One major complication for the whole ASEAN region remains the fact that, despite the adoption of English as the language of communication among nation states, active communities of English language use are scarce and scattered over the member states.

### 1.2.2 English in Thailand

English proficiency levels are generally low in Thailand. Contrary to other countries in the region, Thailand has made very little progress in the development of their English language proficiency scores. Around a decade ago, Thailand ranked in the upper quartile of international tests such as TOEFL iBT with a score of 74 (ETS, 2008). Over this period of time, Thailand has made little progress in comparison with other countries and ranks among the bottom three countries at the moment with a score of 78 (ETS, 2016). In comparison with other Southeast Asian countries with varying levels of internet access and economic growth, Vietnam (70 in 2008, 82 in 2016), South Korea (75 in 2008, 82 in 2016) and Myanmar (70 in 2008, 81 in 2016) have made substantial progress over the same period of time. Part of this can be accounted for by a potential increase of the number of test takers and the demographics of the test takers. However, also on the Ordinary National Educational Test (ONET), the national secondary school final test, English has consistently yielded the lowest scores averaging around 20-25% (Ministry of Education, 2014). English is recognized as an important foreign language in Thailand given its potential as the medium of communication with people outside the country and as a tool of social mobility (Rappa and Wee, 2006). However, English is not officially accepted as a second language, nor is it the most important foreign language since the number of speakers is difficult to estimate and the general level of proficiency is low (Rappa and Wee, 2006). Various explanations have been given to account for the low English language proficiency; however, none of these explanations can fully explain the current situation. The most common explanations discussed in the literature will be addressed in the following section.

One of the main issues Thailand faces is that, despite its claim of Thai being the national language, the country has a highly complex linguistic make up with over 70 different languages spoken and at least four regional varieties of Thai being widely spoken throughout the country (Smalley 1994). Systematic government policies have created a distinct linguistic hierarchy in which central Thai, the

regional variety of Thai spoken in the greater Bangkok area and the adjacent provinces (Thai Tai), is preferred by the central government over any other regional variety of Thai or other language in the country (Smalley, 1988, 1994). Although not recognized as such in the constitution, Thai has become the national language through a series of decrees (Baker, 2012). English, however, does not have an official status in Thailand besides the fact that it is taught as a foreign language in primary, secondary and tertiary education. Its presence can be traced back to use within the Thai elite and royal family in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century before becoming officially part of the national curriculum in 1924 (Foley, 2005). Thailand prides itself that it has never been colonized by a western power and, as a result, efforts to recognize English as an official second language have never materialized since such a policy was believed to constitute a threat to national stability and unity (Wiriyaichitra, 2002).

In addition, English is in direct competition with other languages such as Thai Lao in the Northeast (Draper, 2012a), Kelantan-Pattani Malay, also referred to as Jawi or Yawi, in the deep South (Smalley, 1994) and Mandarin throughout the country (Smalley, 1994; Lee, 2014). Generally, these languages are actively used in larger numbers than English (Smalley, 1994) spread throughout the country. The substantial number of active language communities allows speakers of these languages to claim a cultural identity based on their shared language practices and establish membership of local communities as opposed to a remote community of English speakers. The numerous policies and research articles that claim the importance and widespread use of English in Thailand merely indicate its socio-economic potential as an instrument for social mobility, its prominence in the curriculum through educational policies and recent ASEAN commitments (Draper, 2012b). However, this does not necessarily result in an equal spread of English language proficiency and use throughout the country (Draper, 2012b). Access to English language education is uneven, with the industrialized and more prosperous central region clearly outperforming the poorer rural areas (Draper, 2012a). In addition, the

majority of proficient English speakers can only be found among the Bangkok based elite (Hayes, 2010, Kirkpatrick, 2010; Kosonen, 2008; Luangthongkum, 2007).

### 1.2.3 English language use in Thailand

Another possible explanation for the low levels of English language proficiency in Thailand is the fact that the use of English is limited to a number of specific domains. English is used in the tourist sector, in education as a compulsory subject at the primary, secondary and tertiary level, in academia, business and international trade, and, online communication (Wongsatorn et al, 2003; Foley, 2005; Seargeant, Tagg and Ngampramuan, 2012). The use of English is mostly instrumental (Rappa and Wee, 2006) and it is learned for specific reasons and purposes. As a result, the role and status of English in Thailand is best defined as English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) (Baker, 2012). Firth (1996) describes ELF as “a ‘contact language’ between persons who share neither a common native tongue nor a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication” (240). The consensus at the moment is that Thailand, unlike other countries in the region like Singapore, India and Malaysia, does not have a regional variety of English (Watkhaolarm, 2005). The use of English in Thailand is then best seen as predominantly instrumental and based on a situational specific use as opposed to more communicative uses within language communities.

### 1.3 English language education in Thailand

A large number of papers have addressed the current state of English language education in Thailand and provide insight into the reasons for the low levels of English proficiency. English has been taught at the primary level and secondary level from 2002 onward after the implementation of the Fourth National Education Reform. The number of hours of English language education gradually increases from lower primary school level (two hours per week) to upper secondary school level (four

hours per week). At the tertiary level, students are required to take between six and nine credits of English language education as part of their general education courses. For the majority of students aspiring to become English teachers, depending on the program they attend, they will have to take another 68 credits out of a total of 167 credits of courses related to their field (Rajabhat Bachelor of Education Curriculum see appendix 12). These elective courses focus on the development of more meta-linguistic knowledge such as grammar, syntax, phonology and so forth, and, skills-based courses such as reading, writing, listening and speaking. Although some of the courses are taught by native speaking English teachers, the majority of these courses are taught by Thai teachers and, as Forman (2005) has pointed out, this often means that the language of instruction is Thai and that the use of English in the classroom is not always required.

The Thai education system has gone through a number of policy reforms (for an overview see Kantamara, Hallinger & Jatiket, 2006; Fitzpatrick, 2011; Lao, 2013) to address the general low levels of knowledge and skills of high school graduates. During the fourth education reform in 1999, a paradigm shift moving toward a learner-centered form of education was proposed (National Education Act, 1999, 2002). For English in particular the adoption of the communicative approach to language teaching was advocated in order to address the lack of communicative abilities of high school graduates. However, the implementation of both learner-centeredness and a communicative approach to English language teaching were largely ineffective and did not yield any results for English language proficiency levels (Kantamara, Hallinger & Jatiket, 2006). By the year 2010, the majority of the teachers were still not well acquainted with the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach (Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf and Mori, 2010) due to a lack of training, preparation and feedback mechanisms from the schools on progress (Kantamara, Hallinger & Jatiket, 2006). Forman (2005) argued that even several years after the reform, most of the English teaching still took place in Thai due to the high demands the CLT approach places on the teacher and a lack of understanding of the approach itself. Forman's study indicates that

this is not only an issue at the primary and secondary education level, but also a shortcoming at the undergraduate level and in English language teacher education. In addition, Manajitt (n.d.) showed that the teachers in her study failed to understand the role of students in the CLT approach whereas generally the role of the teacher is understood. As a result, CLT is thought of as an adaptation of the traditional PPP method (Present, Practice, Produce) in which the production stage is replaced with a communicative activity. Despite all the efforts expended to facilitate this paradigm shift, students' lack of general English language proficiency, large classroom sizes, and, students' general discomfort with the CLT approach were identified as the main factors that have prevented a successful transition to a more learner-centered form of language education (Jarvis and Atsilarat, 2005). In addition, the examination format, which only assesses reading and writing skills, has also forced teachers to focus their attention on the development of those skills instead of the development of speaking skills (Jarvis and Atsilarat, 2005).

It can be concluded that despite the commitment to use English as the medium of communication within the ASEAN community and the repeated efforts of the Thai Ministry of Education to introduce a more communicative approach to English language learning, improvements in English language proficiency have not materialized. From the findings discussed above, the reasons for low English language proficiency can be summarized as follows. First of all, the dominant teaching approach seems to focus only on the development of skills that are directly required on tests or for use in highly context specific domains. Second, the lack of opportunities to get exposed to, and, use English has led to a poor language acquisition environment. As a result, students are poorly prepared to use English communicatively and meaningfully outside the classroom.

#### 1.4 Digital technology, literacy development and foreign language learning

While English language proficiency levels have been gradually declining in Thailand, despite its commitment to use English as the medium of communication in the ASEAN region, the amount of people who were using digital technology in their communication and learning practices was gradually increasing over time. For decades researchers have focused their attention on how digital technology can be used to enhance the language learning experience of students in the classroom (Cf Beatty, 2003, Salaberry, 1996 and Warschauer, 1997 for historical overviews). Research in the field of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) has pointed out a number of ways in which CALL and MALL can enhance language learning. This potential is seen in how digital technology can enhance materials and learning tasks used in the classroom, provide learners with opportunities for self-access learning, and enrich the language learning environment in the classroom by providing access to authentic language samples in interactive media. Thomas and Reinders (2010) have explored the potential of the use of computers and digital technology in task-based language learning in the classroom and concluded that digital technology can potentially play an important role in language learning but that this potential in the classroom should not be overestimated or used as an exclusive replacement of current pedagogical approaches to language learning. Whereas most studies have looked at the role of CALL and MALL in the context of classroom teaching and learning, Reinders and Hubbard (2013) point out the role that digital technology and mobile digital technology can play for the individual learner in autonomous and self-directed learning. They emphasize the potential of CALL and MALL in providing cost effective, non-linear, multimodal learning trajectories that encourages learners to reflect on their learning. However, they also emphasize that more often than not, learners are not always equipped with the skills to effectively put these benefits for learning into effect.

In other contexts, there has been a growing interest in how students successfully use the internet, online games and social media, among other tools, to enhance their language learning outside

the classroom (Black, 2008; Gee, 2004; Lam 2009, Lam and Rosario-Ramos, 2009, Thorne, Black and Sykes, 2009). These studies show that digital technology creates opportunities for language learners to be exposed to and use the language in ways that are meaningful for the learners. These opportunities that digital technology creates for meaningful use of English outside the classroom are not limited to well-resourced social contexts, but also take place in contexts in which these digital resources are less available. Mitra and his colleagues (Dangwal & Kapur, 2008; Mitra et al, 2005; Mitra & Dangwal, 2010), for instance, showed through a number of studies in India and Sri Lanka how children and teenagers in low-resource contexts engage in digitally-mediated learning practice outside the classroom and develop basic English language skills and acquire substantial subject related knowledge levels in both self-directed learning processes and collaborative learning communities.

This form of self-directed digitally-mediated learning, however, has yet to be prioritized in mainstream EFL classrooms. In most EFL classrooms, including most of those in Thailand, there is still a strong focus on textbook-based classroom teaching and pre-formulated learning outcomes (Hafner, Chik and Jones, 2013). However, there is ample evidence that learners require a new, different set of skills in order to successfully learn and communicate in these digital learning environments (Jones and Hafner, 2012; Prensky, 2001, 2009; Reinders and Hubbard, 2013). These skills are referred to as digital literacies and include “the practices of communicating, relating, thinking and ‘being’ associated with digital media” (Jones and Hafner, 2012:13). Leander and Aplin (2014) have made an important contribution to understanding these literacies by showing how digital literacy practices cycle in phases through the physical spaces like the classroom, the home and online digital spaces and help people to make meaningful connections between the activities and practices taking place across these different spaces.

## 1.5 Digital technology in English Language Education in Thailand

The benefits of digital technology in language learning have also been noted in Thailand and digital technology has repeatedly been suggested and piloted as a possible remedy to enrich the language acquisition environment and enhance teaching and learning practices. The use of technology and E-learning is recognized as ways to further support the development of a knowledge economy and promote and facilitate the shift to a more learner-centered paradigm during the fourth education reform. The promotion of the development of learner autonomy in general, and a shift to a more learner-centered paradigm in particular, are part of a larger discourse on developing a culture of life-long learning which forms the hallmark of the Fourth National Education Reform in Thailand (National Education Act, 1999, 2002).

The educational potential of digital technology appeared in formal curriculum documents from the third stage of the Fourth National Educational Reform in 2008 (Thai Ministry of Education, 2008). The 2008 Basic Core Curriculum, stipulating the guidelines and intended learning outcomes, is ambiguous in its formulation of the role of technology in Thai education. The basic core curriculum is divided into two parts, with the first part describing general learning goals and the second part describing the specific learning outcomes for each subject area. These learning outcomes are taken up by the schools and developed into a localized school-based curriculum to fit the needs of the local teaching and learning context. In the formulation of the goals and aims of the Basic Core Curriculum, the role of digital technology in teaching and learning is mentioned as a means to promote learner autonomy as part of the earlier introduced shift in paradigms from a teacher-centered to a more learner-centered paradigm. However, in the formulation of the intended learning outcomes of the subject specific learning strands, the role of digital technology is limited to what can best be described as the development of ICT literacies, i.e., skills development to use digital technology in the creation of digital artifacts. The subject specific learning outcomes then formulate the role of digital technology as a

discrete skill to be acquired as part of the computer science course, instead of a tool with the potential to enhance learning across various subjects taught in the curriculum. As a result, the learning strands of the basic core curriculum do not emphasize the development of those digital literacies that would allow learners to develop the independent study skills and enable the teachers to realize a shift to a more learner-centered paradigm.

Thailand, however, has great potential to make effective use of digital technology in learning and teaching due to its high number of mobile internet subscriptions of (52.3 per 100 inhabitants, ITU (2013)) and high social media penetration of 52% (Statista, 2014). This digital infrastructure and the digitally-mediated practices of Thai learners provide great opportunity to explore learners' digital literacy development and out-of-class language learning practices using mobile devices. Despite the conflicting formulation of the role of technology in the Basic Core Curriculum 2008 the Thai ministry of education has piloted several projects to tap into this potential, however, this has had limited success. The most recent project, the One Tablet Per Child (OTPC), was initiated and implemented in 2011 and 2012 to provide primary school students with government subsidized tablets to be used in five subject areas including mathematics, Thai language, social studies, science and English. The project's initial aim was to use the benefits of digital technology to allow learners to learn at any time and any place, enhance the interactivity of learning materials and, promote learner autonomy. At the same time the OTPC tried to alleviate issues of social economic inequality and platform operating system incompatibility by providing uniform tablets for free (Viriyapong & Harfield, 2013). However, several major challenges were encountered at an early stage of implementation (Viriyapong & Harfield, 2013). Among these challenges were inadequate and insufficient teacher training and support, a lack of focus on the development of digital and ICT literacy development of the learners, a lack of learning materials promoting deep cognitive learning, the absence of a proper learning management system to monitor students' progress, and above all, consistent hardware failure. Before these challenges were properly

addressed the program was canceled and the tablets recalled by the Junta after the military coup in 2014.

#### 1.6 Digital technology, literacy development and EFL teacher education

In the field of English teacher education there is limited research available on the development of digital literacy skills and how these literacy skills relate to their current English language learning practices and their future teaching practices. In teacher education, it is not only of interest how student-teachers use digital technology to learn and communicate in English, but also how engaging in these practices affects and shapes the process of becoming a teacher of English in a world in which technology is increasingly mediating our social and learning practices. The current body of research on the development of digital literacies and pedagogical skills development inside and outside the classroom at the pre-service teacher training level is limited to insights into literacy development and learning English as a second or additional language mostly in contexts where the target language is spoken outside the classroom. Examples of this can be found in calls to include a pedagogical focus on digital literacy skills at the pre-service teacher education level (Albers & Harste, 2007), explorations of the perceptions of student-teachers toward the use of technology in their future practices (Wake & Whittingham, 2013), and studies on the use of digital technology for professional development at the pre-service teacher training level (Carpenter, 2015). However, this body of research does not provide a good understanding of the ways digital technology influences the social, literacy and learning practices of non-native English speaking student-teachers and how these practices relate to their learning practices in the classroom. Also, current research does not provide insight into how non-native English speaking student-teachers anticipate digital technology in their future teaching practices in the classroom.

## 1.7 Research on Digital Technology in English Language Learning and Teaching in Thailand

The actual application of E-learning and technology in classroom learning and teaching to mitigate the educational problems in Thailand, like the OTPC project discussed above, are not widely documented in research publications. Most research on technology in language learning and teaching in Thailand can be classified as traditional CALL studies and center on the use of technology as a tool to enhance teaching in the classroom. Most of the studies, however, suffer from the same problems as described Macaro, Handley and Walter (2010) in that they fail to report valid, reliable and generalizable findings on the use of technology in English language learning and teaching. Only a few studies draw on learners' existing digital social practices as a starting point to enhance English language learning practices inside the classroom. Up to now, there has been no research in the Thai context on the ways digital technology is used by Thai student-teachers as part of their English language and literacy development. There has, however, been research done with undergraduate students who are not enrolled in teacher education programs. Reinders and Wattana (2014), for instance, looked at the use of online role play games out of class as a way of facilitating the willingness of learners to communicate inside the classroom. Their findings indicated that out-of-class participation in online role-playing games which make active use of English can result in improved confidence in speaking in class, substantially lower levels of anxiety in using the language and a more positive self-assessment by students of their English language competence. Somdee and Suppasetsee (2013) in their study looked at the potential of online storytelling to facilitate the development of speaking skills. Although they found a negligible improvement in students' speaking abilities, students generally reflected positively on the experience. Another study by Van De Bogart (2015) provides an example of student's self-directed, more ubiquitous, digitally-mediated learning practices in the successful application of university EFL students' use of the popular Line chat application as a way to communicate with the teacher. In his study carried out in a large undergraduate course, students showed an increase in the amount of interaction they had with

their English teacher and positively evaluated the use of a type of digital media with which they were familiar as part of their regular communicative routines. In another study, Sawatdeenarunat (2014) acknowledges the positive influence of digital technology and online resources in English language learning but stresses the fact that this potential for Thai TESOL students is limited by their English skills.

The majority of studies on the use technology in English language education in Thailand, however, have focused on the use of technology as a way to mediate *teaching* practices instead of learning practices. These studies use small scale, pre- and post-test based experiments to investigate the effect of digitally-mediated teaching on isolated areas of performance such as grammar (Tongpoon, 2001; Intratat, 2003) pronunciation (Yangklang, 2006), and reading (Phongnapharuk, 2007) or investigate the substitution of textbook based input with CALL materials (Torut and Torut 2003; Thongtua, 2008). In the majority of these studies, observed differences in performance are not statistically significant and the findings cannot solely be attributed to the use of technology in teaching. Another type of study covers attitudes toward the use of technology in the classroom on the basis of survey studies (e.g., Watson Todd, 2008; Intratat, 2009; Van de Bogart, 2011). These studies, however, usually lack a substantial sample size and fail to capture the actual digitally-mediated learning practices in the classroom. In an overview of the application of Computer Mediated Language Learning (CALL) in Thailand, Khamkhien (2010) concludes that technology enhanced teaching in Thailand can function as a useful ad hoc addition to the teaching procedures as it provides the potential to enrich the language acquisition context, but that it should only be applied in a limited amount of situations. In addition, he argues that it is the responsibility of the learners to determine what language skills can be developed through which technology enhanced application. This view on the role of technology in English language education essentially situates the application and potential of technology in English language teaching practices rather than learning practices and restricts it to the domain of the teacher rather than the learner.

Despite the number of studies carried out within the context of Thai EFL education, the majority of studies conceive of digital technology as a way to enhance teaching instead of learning. Although several studies reported on the relationship between the use of digital technology in language learning outside the classroom and its effect on the classroom based learning, these studies focus on one particular application and fail to take into account the exposure and use of English as part of the wider digital English literacy practices that learners engage in on a daily basis. In addition, there is currently no research addressing the role of digital technology in English teacher education in Thailand.

## 1.8 Conclusion and Research Questions

In this chapter, I have discussed how, despite a strong commitment of Thailand to adopt English as the medium of communication in the ASEAN community, several educational reforms aimed at improving English language standards, and, a number of projects piloting the use of technology in English language education, Thailand still faces low English language proficiency scores. Although the potential of digital technology as a tool to enhance English language learning and teaching in the classroom has been acknowledged and researched, these efforts have not resulted in higher levels of language proficiency. The current body of research indicates the potential of digital technology as a tool for helping language learners to engage in meaningful English literacy and language learning practices outside the classroom. Thailand's advanced digital infrastructure as compared to other countries in the region, and its high social media penetration offer great potential to further research the out-of-class digital English literacy and learning practices. This thesis recognizes this potential and aims to create a better understanding of the ways digital technology affects the English literacy and language learning practices students engage in outside the classroom and the pedagogical potential of these independent digital literacy and learning practices for classroom based learning and teaching.

Three research questions have been formulated to create a better understanding of the digital English literacy and language learning practices of Thai student teachers. These questions inform and direct the theoretical discussion that follows in the next chapter.

1. What are the ways Thai student-teachers use digital technology in their daily literacy practices and how do these digital literacy practices create opportunities for them to engage in English literacy and language learning practices outside the classroom?

2. How do the digital literacy practices that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom create opportunities for English language learning and literacy development inside the classroom?

3. How do the attitudes and beliefs about the use of digital technology in English language learning and literacy practices of individual student-teachers relate to the larger set of beliefs and attitudes in society toward the use digital technology in language education and literacy development?

### 1.9 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises eight chapters. The current chapter provides the rationale of the study and situates this rationale in the context of digital literacy and language learning practices in Thai teacher education. The second chapter discusses a theoretical framework for the thesis and provides a critical discussion of the role of digital technology in language learning and literacy development, approaches to literacy development, and, how these concepts relate to notions of time and social space. It will also provide a detailed overview of Mediated Discourse Analysis which provides the theoretical foundation for the discussion and analysis of this thesis. The methodology used in this thesis, Nexus Analysis, will be discussed in chapter 3. In this chapter, a description is given of the participants, the research site, the methods and instruments used in a nexus analysis as an ethnographic approach to studying discourse and action, and of the role I take up as a non-participant researcher in this thesis. Chapter 4 provides a visual and narrative snapshot of the digital literacy and learning practices of the student-teachers as

they go through their daily routines. As I describe their daily digital literacy and learning routines, I theorize a framework of space, time, practices and the trajectories that link these spaces. In the chapters following, I describe the digital English literacy and learning practices of the student-teachers in the classroom, chapter 5, and outside the classroom, chapter 6. In chapter 7, I widen the scope of the analysis and show how the use of digital technology in English language learning at the classroom level are grounded in the discourses and practices at various levels in society. The thesis concludes with a discussion chapter that ties up all the findings from the previous chapters within the theoretical framework discussed in chapter 2.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Introduction

This discussion provides a review of the role of digital technology as a tool for language learning and teaching in general, and in particular how the use of digital technology has influenced where and when we engage in these digital literacy practices. It will then discuss what the theoretical implications are for literacy development when taking into account the benefits of mobility that digital technology has created.

### 2.2 Digital technology and language learning

As I mentioned in the last chapter, the role of the internet and digital technology as ways to increase the exposure to English and create opportunities for learners to use the language in countries where exposure to English is otherwise scarce has been intensively studied. Although there is great potential of digital technology and the internet in language learning, the interaction between digital technology and learning and teaching is a complex process and has far reaching implications for how language learning and teaching is understood. Often it is not just digital technology that is responsible for the observed effects on learning but rather the interaction between a number of factors that best explains this process (Larsen-Freeman, 1997).

Although, technology-assisted learning or technology-mediated learning has been around for decades and has developed over time as a result of continuing technological developments, the term e-Learning described as “the convergence of learning and networks” (Cross, 2004:104) was only coined in 1998. However, an important difference between the past and now is that these digital tools have not always been available to a larger audience. An important way in which digital technology has influenced language learning exists in the interaction between the affordances that digital technological developments have provided and the affordability of digital devices. Over time, technological

developments have been made better accessible to a wider audience through more affordable devices and this has also led to an increased use in language learning. These new forms of technology allowed people to not only replace existing practices with digital practices, but also extend the range of actions they could take.

In the early stages of the development of audio recording technology, innovations such as the gramophone facilitated teaching pronunciation and honing listening skills. This method was widely used with the direct method, which at the time was the preferred method of teaching. Cheaper and better audio and visual recording and presenting equipment facilitated the use of language labs widely used in the Audio-Lingual method and later the Audio-Visual method. Not only did this enrich the input learners received but it also provided wider access to exposure to English language input. The majority of the early technological applications focused predominantly on assisting the instructor in the delivery of the materials or delivering richer input. Faster and more affordable versions of micro computers, and later personal computers, facilitated a more learner-centered application of technology in language learning.

The early applications of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) shifted the focus from more teacher-centered tools to learner-centered applications. The development of CALL to its current form can be summarized in three phases, a behaviorist approach to CALL from the 1960s and 1970s, the communicative approach to CALL from the 1970s and 1980s, and, a more integrated approach to CALL from the 1990s onward (Warschauer, 1996). The earliest forms of CALL were mostly based on drill and practice methods following a behaviorist tradition to language teaching with the underlying assumption that repeated practice and exposure is essential to language learning, and, that computers offer a suitable self-paced method for this form of practice. A communicative approach to CALL tried to provide content which was less focused on form and drill practice and more focused on the use of forms in a meaningful context. Communicative CALL aligned its practice with more cognitivist approaches to language teaching. It tried to create a language learning environment in which the target language was

used as the language of instruction. This facilitated implicit language teaching styles in which multiple answers were possible and it refrained from providing corrective feedback or evaluative comments (Underwood, 1984).

The next stage in CALL developed out of criticism of previous versions of CALL which were claimed to be too text-based and lack the application of language use in a social context (Warschauer and Healy, 1998). A more integrated approach to CALL provided a more comprehensive learning experience by using multimedia materials which created a more real-life learning experience using all four language skills to promote language practice in a content-rich environment (Warschauer, 1996). In this approach to CALL language learners were able to take more control over their own learning paths through the application of hypermedia which linked sources of multimedia information in a non-linear fashion and by receiving active feedback on their performance. However, its effectiveness was questioned since the materials were considered to lack the interactivity required for language learning. In addition, the state of technological development at that time also lacked the sophistication to provide real interaction with the language learners (Warschauer, 1996).

Further technological developments and more widespread access to the internet in the 1990s provided learners with a vital additional learning feature, synchronous and asynchronous Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). Research related to CMC has been around since the early days of data communication when predecessors of what is now known as the internet (e.g., Scollon and Scollon, 2004) allowed people to explore various ways of synchronous and asynchronous Computer Mediated Communication. Better and more widespread availability of internet access and better software increased the rate of development of applications and increased the role of CMC in literacy development and English language learning. Faster and richer internet provided learners with a platform which allowed for a more effective use of hypermedia and provided opportunities for learners to get in contact with other learners and speakers of English outside the classroom. This created an affordable

way to use the language communicatively and meaningfully in cross-cultural settings. The creation of online learning communities and access to learning resources fostering collaborative learning were facilitated due to the affordance of online social interaction mediated by CALL. This affordance allowed learners to extend their language learning practices to digital spaces and make meaningful links between physical spaces and digital spaces. For instance, learners would find meaningful ways of using the language in online forums of their interest while studying the language in the physical classroom. For those learners with access to the internet, this provided opportunities to use and get exposed to the language anytime and any place outside the scheduled hours in the language learning classroom.

Warschauer (1997) reviewed a large number of writing studies which involved CMC learning activities focused on collaborative language learning. He found that the learning practices involving CMC in language education in the mid 1990s reflected a clear sociocultural view of learning in which learning is essentially seen as a socially constructed activity where social interaction plays a central role (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, Warschauer concluded that the learning practices of CMC involve situation specific learning where the learning task becomes meaningful through its application to multiple contexts and the use of communicative language which is normally used outside the educational context (Warschauer, 1997). This contrasts with the behaviorist and cognitivist foundations of earlier versions of CALL and underpins the potential influence of CMC, and, of technology in general, on language learning and teaching. Most importantly, it shows how the potential benefits of CMC and integrated CALL have influenced language learning and teaching practices.

### 2.3 Mobility in technology-mediated learning

Parallel to CALL, a new strand of technology-mediated learning has developed, Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL). Learners nowadays are increasingly better connected to the internet and this significantly impacts their learning and communication practices. This is of particular importance for

developing countries where the internet is predominantly accessed through mobile internet connections due to a lack of a physical digital infrastructure (ITU, 2014). People in general are more mobile than a decade ago and it is not surprising that this mobility, in combination with increased mobile internet access, has also increased people's exposure to English online and the number of opportunities to interact with information and learning resources on the internet. Mobile learning (M-learning) and Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) have become increasingly more popular and more widely used in education in general and language learning in particular. The general interest in M-learning and MALL is not surprising since the affordances are situated in the interaction between mobility, time and place. MALL extends the affordances of mobility by offering alternatives to structured forms of learning dependent or independent of space and time (Kukulske-Hulme, 2012, Traxler, 2009).

Within the current body of literature, the affordances of mobility have been described in two ways: the mobility of the device and the mobility of the learner. The first affordance, the mobility of a device with mobile internet access, is frequently used in structured institution based learning. A teacher can set a task in class which requires students to access the internet and find information and paraphrase their findings. Students can use their mobile devices and do not have to leave the classroom to go to a computer lab to find the answers. The majority of e-learning, M-learning and MALL is associated with this application of technology-mediated learning. In this particular case, the affordance of mobility is used with reference to the portability and connectivity of the device within a traditional learning space or as an extension of the learning space. A number of studies show how these affordances have been applied to the development of listening skills (Demouy and Kukulska-Hulme, 2010; Edirisingha, Rizzi, Nie and Rothwell, 2007), reading skills (Lan, Sung and Chang, 2007), and, vocabulary development (Thornton and Houser, 2005; Stockwell, 2007). In addition, Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2007) show how the affordance of mobility creates opportunities to enhance cooperative learning activities including speaking and writing skills development as either an activity done in the

classroom using computers or mobile devices or as an extension of a classroom-based activity performed outside the classroom. Learning activities like these use the affordance of mobile technology to take an existing CALL activity outside the classroom. This approach to the use of technology in learning and teaching turns MALL and M-learning into mobile equivalents of CALL. As a result, the affordance of mobility only enhances the traditional teacher-directed classroom, but it does not necessarily change how students learn. Instead, the affordance of digital technology only enriches the learning materials and facilitates access to information and other learning resources within a set learning task or activity.

Although the ways in which digital technology enhances current learning and teaching tasks have enriched classroom learning, it can be questioned if it has substantially changed learning and teaching in the classroom and better allows learners to take learning outside the classroom. From the review above it seems that the MALL and M-learning activities are at best adaptations of learning tasks which still reflect the static nature of learning tasks in the physical classroom, with arranged times for specific subjects to be discussed, a firm social hierarchy between students and teachers, and a fixed curriculum prescribing the content to be learned. These more traditional teaching and learning practices, however, are increasingly more under pressure due to a growing awareness that mobility also applies to the learner and learning itself (Sharples et al. 2007, Traxler, 2007) and that mobile digital technology can make meaningful links to social interaction and literacy practices outside the classroom (Kakihara and Sorensen, 2002; Kukulske-Hulme et al, 2011).

As regards the mobility of the learner, a number of studies have been conducted with the use of mobile devices and learning sites outside the classroom. Taylor et al (2006) have attempted to build a theoretical framework on the basis of their experience with the museum scenario in MOBIlearn. Participants were observed while using a number of different mobile devices to interact with the information around them in the museum. Taylor and his colleagues concluded that the use of digital

devices as an important tool in their learning practices outside a formal teacher-centered learning space creates affordances of both accessing information through these digital tools as well as using these digital devices to interact with other visitors and discuss the information they found. In addition, they found that the use of more versatile forms of mobile technology as part of their learning experience in the museum, also gradually changed the participants' perception of the semiotic space, the museum. Taylor and his colleagues reported that over time participants were willing to, as they called it, "de-sanctify" the sacred space of the museum by being more tolerant toward other forms of interaction besides social practices normally associated with museums. These observations provide interesting insights into the concept of space and time in relation to the affordance of the mobility of the learner. Their findings indicate that MALL and M-learning have the affordance of relieving the restrictions of space and time placed on learning by the traditional schooling system. In addition, the use of digital technology to mediate their interaction with the objects in the museum extended the affordance to engage with the objects and information in more diverse, and, more interactive ways than in the traditional museum space where this affordance is not present. Taylor et al emphasized that in order to better understand the potential of m-learning and MALL "[a] central concern must be to understand how people artfully engage their surroundings to create impromptu sites of learning" (p. 222). Kukulska-Hulme (2013) supports this notion and argues that location-specific applications can turn a specific context into a functional language learning site by using context-aware applications. These applications can for instance provide context or location specific vocabulary or connect users with local speakers of the language who are willing to engage in the learning experience. Context-independent applications can be used at any time when the opportunity arises regardless of a specific context or space. This time-independent aspect provides an important affordance as it does not only take learning out of the physical classroom, but it also allows learners to have more control over when they learn. This allows

the learner to exercise more control over the learning task and the possible social interaction which is at the basis of the learning experience.

#### 2.4 Mobility and Learning: Space and time

The abovementioned review of applications of M-learning and MALL has illustrated the affordances of mobility and its interaction with space and time for language learning. It was also argued that there has been a shift from more pre-designed content-driven applications to more applications which enable independent learning regardless of the physical setting. Although the temporal and spatial affordances of mobility have been mentioned, they have only been discussed in a framework of testing the efficiency of specific applications or the performance of learners within specific spaces.

Subsequently, the relationship between time and space is viewed as simplistic without observing the interaction between time, space and the learning practices of the learners. As a result, the notion of space and the affordance of mobility in most research within M-learning and MALL fails to take into account the relationship between the digital practices of the learners, the tools they use to engage in practices, and the time and space in which these practices take place. These particular conceptions of mobility as an affordance and digital technology as a mediational means are problematic since the affordances are situated in the material tool itself, and not as Jones (2016) points out “at the point of contact between the tool and the conditions of its use” (p. 57).

With the emergence of digital technology and digital spaces, the traditional concepts of space and physical space in particular, have become problematic (Massey, 2005). It is claimed that technology has changed our perception of space and time (Barnes, 2003) and that digital technology has changed the ways in which students learn and how they view this learning within the traditional classroom as opposed to the learning they engage in outside the classroom (Prensky, 2001, 2009). In addition, our digital learning practices are not situated in one particular space, but rather move across a network of

social spaces where they establish interactions and links between these spaces through trajectories of social practices. As a result, both spaces and practices transform as the practices learners engage in move across these trajectories over time and intersect with other practices along their trajectories (Scollon, 2001).

The notion of space as being transformative, produced by mediated action, social practices and the mediational means we appropriate to mediate our practices, allows for alternative interpretations and conceptions of how learning, teaching and social practices intersect and produce the contemporary classroom. As Leander, Phillips and Taylor (2010) point out; the classroom is increasingly being seen as situated in a 'nexus of relations' instead of a contained space bound by its institutional practices and physical boundaries. They emphasize that researching learning spaces should include a focus on the connections the classroom has with other spaces across which learning resources are distributed and how learners navigate access to these resources in these networks of resources. The digital tools learners use as part of their literacy practices create an important affordance which allows them to make meaningful links between the literacy and learning resources in a network of digital and physical spaces. The latter is of particular interest since these digital practices allow for the formation of laminated spaces, a construct defined by Goffman (1981), in which layers of human interaction take place simultaneously. These laminated layers of interaction in the modern classroom will not only be interactions directed toward learning, but include multiple other kinds of interactions and digital practices that have gradually become part of our digital routines over time.

This fluid conceptualization of the classroom as a space through which practices cycle has been observed in a number of publications. Massey (2005), for instance, argues that the increasing mobility and use of technology gives way to a perception of the classroom as a more fluid social space through which the different social practices and learning trajectories students engage in coexist and cycle subsequently changing social and learning practices that construct the classroom as a social space. In

addition, Leander and Aplin (2014) describe how digital social practices cycle through the various spaces learners engage in these practices. Building on Lemke's (2001) notion of traversals, trajectories of meaningful linkages between moments of action that transgress traditional boundaries of space, Leander and Aplin describe how technology allows learners to produce trajectories of practices which create meaningful links between the different spaces. In some cases, these trajectories are self-regulated and learners draw their own boundaries as to when and where these practices take place. For others, these moments of action extend beyond fixed times and places and form rhythmic patterns of moments of action which cycle through different spaces. This creates a lamination of levels of social interaction in which various literacy practices co-exist. In addition, these trajectories create meaningful links between the different social spaces in which learners engage in these practices creating a network of linked spaces or what Leander et al (2010) refer to as a "nexus of relations" (p. 336).

One strand of research which has particularly been sensitive to the transitivity of spaces and learning activities is that which has focused on children's geographies. Leander, Phillips and Taylor (2010) argue that in order to construct in-school learning activities it is of great importance to look at how children perceive learning, playing, and, being outside the classroom. In their synthesis of previous research, they point out the importance of a multifocal approach to mapping learning activities across a number of spaces, the relationship between these different spaces and the mobility of the children across these spaces. A similar approach could be very insightful for older students at the secondary and tertiary level as well. For these students, mapping their activities, learning routines and ways of being across spaces and the relationship between these spaces in combination with the mediational tools, either digital or instrumental, could form a more effective starting point for the design of learning activities in the classroom than the current textbook centered approach that is prevalent in most EFL classes. Of particular importance are the spaces, both physical and digital, and the trajectories between these spaces that are beyond the reach of the teacher. Most importantly, in order to investigate acts of

technology-mediated learning while describing temporal and spatial affordances of mobility one should take into account the larger 'nexus of relations' between the different spaces across which the social practices take place (Leander et al 2010). A nexus of relations views space not as an individual container, but takes into account the relationships between the different spaces and the trajectories of practices of learners across these spaces. This notion is of particular importance if claims are made about the affordance of mobility and how these affordances can be put to effective use by learners in creating pathways and trajectories of learning practices across networks of spaces. If put to effective use learning practices are no longer based on single learning instances in specific spaces such as the classroom, but situated on trajectories of practices which, as they cycle through these spaces, form an aggregate of learning moments across different, but interlinked spaces. In addition to the notion of a nexus of relations, a nexus of practice forms a comprehensive tool within the framework of mediated discourse analysis to study the linkages between these practices as they intersect at sites of engagement as unique moments in time and space.

This different view on space in general, and the classroom in particular, is important for teachers, administrators, and, policy makers to understand how the use of digital technology has changed what literacy practices students engage in, where they do this and when they do this. For the current thesis it is of particular importance to understand what the pedagogical potential of these literacy practices is for in-class use, but also how these out-of-class literacy practices affect in-class learning. The terms language and literacy practices have been used throughout the first part of this chapter in more general terms. The next section will engage in a more detailed discussion of language and literacy practices and how these practices are situated in society in general and education in particular.

## 2.5 Language and literacy as social practice

The field of New Literacy Studies (Street, 1984; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; 2000, Gee 2004, 2008) will form an important starting point for the discussion on the basic principles of literacy and will be extended later in this chapter to the notions of digital literacy and information literacy. In its simplest form, literacy can be seen as a social practice in itself (Barton, 1994; Barton and Hamilton, 2000, Gee, 2008) and literacy practices as “the general cultural ways of utilising written language which people draw upon in their lives” (Barton and Hamilton, 2000:7). Literacy events, the activities in which literacy has a role (Barton and Hamilton, 2000) and literacy practices thus become an essential and integrated part of living and being as they form important tools for effectively participating in social practices (Gee, 2004). Languages then, cannot be seen as autonomous systems which people learn to decipher or use to produce written texts which subsequently empower them cognitively and hence socio-economically. Instead, language and literacy are embedded in, and learned through, the social practice of a community (Street, 1984). Street’s ideological model of literacy approaches literacy from the perspective of knowledge and argues that the way in which people approach writing and reading are grounded in their notions of knowledge and the various identities they construct upon these practices. Literacy, then, becomes a more ideological notion which is a social practice as such and varies among communities of practice. Also, this approach to literacy gives room to extend the discussion beyond a single literacy, being able to read and write, and include multiple associated literacies, some of which are typically learned at school and some which are learned through other practices. Based on the theoretical notions on literacy discussed in this section the argument can be made that literacy practices are essentially grounded in our social practices and that the majority of our social practices always involve some form of literacy practices. In addition, the learning practices we engage in as part of literacy development, either in formal or informal contexts, are grounded in social interactions and can therefore be seen as part of our social and thus literacy practices. For the sake of consistency and the fact that the main focus

of this study is centered on literacy development, the remainder of this study will refer to the general practices that the student-teachers engage in as 'literacy practices' and it will not further differentiate between social practices, learning practices and literacy practices.

Gee (2004, 2008) argues that (foreign) language learning and literacy development cannot be reduced to learning the language as an abstract rule-governed system which we appropriate to exchange information, but instead is related to the wider body of linked practices that language affords us to engage in. Language and literacy are thus mediational tools which allow us to say something, to be someone, and, to do something (Gee, 2008). In other words, language, action and identity as such cannot be seen as separate entities. The things we say, the people we are and the things we do are all situated, and different situations are governed by the different practices which are normative for that particular situation (Gee, 2008). Gee (2008) further argues that literacy and literacy development has a social and political dimension as well. Reading and writing, according to Gee, refers not only to understanding a text from one's own literacy practices, but also to appropriating the wider discourses, beliefs, values and ways of thinking which are reflected in the situated literacy practices of institutions and groups in society. Failure to understand and read these wider discourses and ways of thinking and believing effectively excludes one from understanding these discourses. For instance, an undergraduate student in a social studies classroom can be reprimanded for questioning the validity of information presented by the teacher and ridiculed by the teacher for his 'incorrect' use of English. The lesson is conducted in English as part of the general education requirement although the teacher's and students' first language is Thai. In another scenario, the same actors could be interacting on English web forum about bird watching in Thailand. The student here is an avid and experienced birdwatcher and the teacher is new to the 'world of birding'. The 'teacher' posts a sighting of a bird in a specific area and the 'student' questions the accuracy of a sighting done by the teacher and gets credit for it as it helps the 'teacher' to find out which bird he actually spotted. These two scenarios are governed by different

literacy practices and both participants take up different roles, identities, use and master English in different ways. In the first situation, the literacy practices might include expectations and actions such as not challenging the teacher's authority and the use of 'correct' academic English in the classroom. In the second situation, the literacy practices might include actions and expectations about using specific terminology to indicate specific parts of the bird for identification and being critical of each other's sightings to make sure that an accurate record is kept of birds in a specific area. The same act 'questioning people's knowledge and understanding' receives a different meaning depending on the space in which it is acted out, the roles the participants take up, and the practice it is part of. The student might not master the situation specific 'classroom English' expected in a social studies class, however, he is an expert in appropriating the English needed for bird watching. The teacher might be a master of the classroom English needed to teach social studies but lacks the skills needed to use English on a bird watching forum. In this example, by using a specific type of register in English which includes specialist vocabulary, specific grammar forms and so forth, participants establish an identity, i.e., a teacher, student, birding expert or newcomer to the field of birding. This identity affords them to take certain actions and is produced in return by engaging in these practices such as questioning the accuracy of information, or reprimanding someone for questioning their authority. Gee (2008) points out that these identities and actions make meaning through their emplacement in a specific space, i.e., a physical classroom as a learning space or a digital space in the form of an online forum for birding enthusiasts. We apply 'cultural models' which form the foundation for the beliefs and principles communities hold and which are reflected in their cultural practices to make meaning out of situated language use (2008).

## 2.6 Literacy Development and the Social Distribution of Learning

Developing literacy practices is not only an essential part of being able to participate in literacy events in the wider spectrum of society but these literacy practices also afford learners the ability to

engage in learning practices within institutional settings which are situated and highly codified. Gee (2004) argues that learning is best done when it is embodied in an experience, action or situation in which learners can relate to the content. The effectiveness of the learning event is then based on how well students can identify their previous experiences and practices with the learning task at hand, and, how well their literacy and cultural practices translate into the practices demanded in the task. These previous learning experiences and literacy practices are grounded and acquired through what Gee calls “cultural learning processes”. Cultural learning processes usually take place in the home and outside institutional environments. They are not necessarily related to cultural practices, but situated in the content and topics with which learners have an affinity, and, to which they can relate. Gee (2004) argues that the type of situated literacy events that learners develop and engage in outside the classroom are essential for successful participation and development of the schooled literacies taking place within education. He argues that a discrepancy between the literacy practices developed through cultural learning by children within different ethnic communities at home and the more institutionalized literacies traditionally required in educational environments disadvantages children from certain ethnic communities whose literacy practices are not endorsed and acknowledged in the curriculum of their local schools. This exemplifies how literacy practices are grounded in and mediated through social, political and socio-cultural conceptualizations of discourses on for instance literacy, learning, knowledge and so forth. It also shows how access to literacy events alone is not sufficient for effective participation in codified literacy practices such as language learning in the classroom.

An important contribution to literacy development and access to opportunities to engage in literacy events comes from the work on the social distribution of literacy by Kalman (2005). Kalman (2005) makes an important distinction between opportunities to develop literacy skills, access to actual literacy events, and the literacy skills required to participate in these literacy events. She argues that the development literacy practices is not only restricted or facilitated by the availability of literacy

resources, such as the dissemination of the tools and material resources that mediate literacy events, but also the access to literacy events and the literacy practices that are needed to effectively make use of literacy resources. The availability of literacy refers to the actual infrastructure that is necessary to provide access to written language such as books, magazines but also internet access, computers and other means that mediate access. Although these resources are important, Kalman argues that the access to literacy is equally important. Access to literacy is according to Kalman the result of “the modalities of appropriation and the social relations that develop around written language” (Kalman, 2005:9). In other words, access to literacy relates to learning the situated literacy practices that allow learners to enact membership of a community of readers and writers, socially relate to members within this community and understand their written texts, the modalities that mediate these texts and their discourses on written language.

Although Kalman’s research was centered on learning basic literacy skills by adult women from marginalized communities, the division between availability and access to literacy has implications within the context of digital English literacy practices as well. Although the affordances of digital technology have facilitated access to opportunities to use the language in various spaces and have increased exposure to English, the “modalities of appropriation” and the situated digital literacy practices are skills that are not covered in the language learning classes learners receive through mainstream education. As argued in the previous chapter, foreign language education in most EFL countries are mainly centered on textbook-based approaches and high school exit tests which do not develop the more complex literacy practices that learners engage in as part of their digital English literacy practices. In addition, this conceptualization of access and availability to literacy does not only afford theoretical insights into the underlying process of literacy development, but also provides a methodological framework for the analysis and interpretation of literacy practices across a wide variety

of literacy practices including digitally-mediated literacy practices, academic literacy practices and pedagogical literacy practices.

## 2.7 Development of Digital Literacy Practices

In a changing society in which digital technology is mediating a large part of our social interaction and our interaction with information, new practices are arising which require new and different skills. While new digital technologies have changed the tools we use to mediate our actions, they have also essentially changed our actions and the way we experience these actions (Jones and Hafner, 2012). This is not to say that the process of mediation has changed as such, however, the new affordances and constraints of new digital technology extend the range of actions we can take. These new digital practices or digital literacies are defined by Jones and Hafner (2012) as “the practices of communicating, relating, thinking and ‘being’ associated with digital media” (P.13). This definition sees digital literacy practices, as similar to the literacy practices discussed above, but mediated by different technologies. Jones and Hafner argue that by using digital technology and mobile devices to mediate our actions, we extend our literacy practices beyond physical spaces into digital and online spaces. As a result, digital technology facilitates overcoming traditional physical boundaries that separate people from engaging in literacy practices together. Access to the internet and the right device allow us to engage in literacy practices which are no longer restricted by physical access such as access to a library, institutions or social interaction with people who are not directly present within the same physical space. The internet offers a number of affordances for different kinds of technology-mediated social interaction or computer-mediated communication in which people use English and develop digital literacies across digital and physical spaces. Lam (2009) studied digital literacy practices in transnational digital networks among adolescents from an immigrant background. She found that people from immigrant backgrounds from various origins use online digital media and computer-mediated

communication to look up information such as news on their countries of origin, practice their native language in order to maintain it, and, practice English online with other people to become more fluent. These multilingual practices in digital spaces allowed the participants to create a symbolic online transnational field, a space in which actors can connect across geographical borders. In addition, their participation in these online transnational fields allowed them to draw on multiple (cultural) perspectives by accessing both local media sources and media outlets in their country of origin or in their native language when discussing current issues. In another study, Lam and Rosario-Ramos (2009) showed how two youths from immigrant backgrounds develop and maintain their digital literacies and their native languages online and use their native language to participate in what Gee (2004) calls online affinity spaces, an online social space in which people come together to share their interest or passion of a particular topic of their interest. While engaging in these affinity spaces, both participants develop a specialist language in their field of expertise which goes beyond normal communicative language use. In addition, a study by Black (2008) showed how adolescents participated in online affinity spaces for fan fiction. She showed that a number of meta-linguistic strategies were applied to provide feedback on writing and narrative development of other participant's fan fiction stories. These studies have shown that people apply, maintain, and, develop digital literacies and English literacies, as either a second or foreign language, in online spaces as part of their regular literacy practices and not necessarily as part of institutionalized language learning practices. The studies have revealed that knowledge sharing and learning takes place across digital spaces and geographical boundaries and that this experience is mediated by either English or multiple other languages.

In the case of monolingual English speaking students' digital literacy development, Leander and Aplin (2014) show that digital literacy practices within national borders are not typically associated with a particular social space, but rather rotate in phases across the spaces. Students incorporate both digital literacies associated with the home in school and vice versa. The way in which these digital literacies are

applied depends more on the intersection of social interactions between spaces than a strictly defined application within one specific space. In a related study, Burnett (2009) shows how teacher trainees bring their 'out-of-school' digital literacies into the classroom during teaching practice hours without any direct curricular requirements. This latter case is particularly interesting as the physical classroom to which the teacher-trainees brought their digital literacies were typical learning or practice spaces for them, but a working space for the mentoring teacher at the school. Although the pre-service teachers showed confidence in using digital literacies in the classroom, Burnett questions if there is any 'transformative potential' in their practices if the dominant discourses reflecting a resistance against incorporating digital literacies in the classroom remain unchallenged. This is an important consideration for many educational contexts in which the current practices reflect discourses resistant to the development of students and teacher-trainees digital literacy development.

What can be concluded from the studies and theoretical insights above is that the use of English and multilingualism in an increasingly globalizing and mobile society is creating opportunities for self-directed learning across a wide variety of spaces. Digital technology plays an important role in this process as it forms a tool to mediate our social interactions across spaces. Mediation in this case is the central concept around which our actions, discourses and literacy practices are formed. Although research on CMC in CALL and MALL take into account the use of technology and increasingly acknowledge the role of social interaction at the basis of learning, these approaches view the mobility of the learner as a key factor in defining learning across spaces whereas it fails to take into account the nature and fluidity of the space and time itself. Studies on new literacies and digital literacies have taken into account the nature of space and time when discussing the affordance of mobility created by digital technology. However, more insight can be created into learning, language learning and the development of digital literacies across spaces if both action and language, and, the interaction between these two are taken into account. Including not only the language but also the actions we take by using that

language reflects better the theory of language as proposed by Gee (2008) in which language is seen as language in use, a tool with which we do something, say something and be someone. Including both language and social actions provides a more comprehensive description of language as a mediational means for our social actions across spaces, and the accumulation of social actions into our practices. At the same time, including an analysis of the relationship between these actions and discourses at the interpersonal level and the wider discourses and socio-political and cultural relationships between groups in society will provide insight into how the practices and discourses at one level are grounded in another. Mapping this relationship is important in the discussion of language learning in its institutionalized form as it is part of the larger discourses of language policies in a country. In its cultural form, the relationship is important for language learning and literacies development as it is part of and reflects the socio-cultural practices of communities within society. The remainder of this chapter will discuss how mediated discourse analysis and its methodological approach, nexus analysis, provide a theoretical platform to approach this complex relationship.

## Chapter 3: Mediated Discourse Analysis as a Theoretical Framework

### 3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to present Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA) as a theoretical framework and an approach to study discourse and action in digital literacy practices and language learning. The theoretical underpinnings of Mediated Discourse Analysis will form the epistemological foundation of this thesis. This chapter will start with an introduction to the basic concepts of MDA as an approach to analyze discourse, action and practices. It will then elaborate on the central principles of MDA and discuss how these principles form theoretical tools that allow us to better understand digital literacy practices and how these digital practices are situated in space and time.

### 3.2 A Mediated Discourse Analysis Approach to Studying Discourse *in Action*

Mediated Discourse Analysis is a comprehensive approach to studying the relationship between discourse and action and finds its epistemological and ontological foundation in social constructionism. MDA tries to fill the void between approaches to discourse analysis approaches that analyze discourse without taking into account action and fields of study of social analysis that focus solely on action without taking into account discourse (Scollon, 2001). Central to the field of MDA is the mediated action or social action. Mediated action builds on the Vygotskian notion of mediation (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991, 1998) and refers to the idea that human action is always mediated by instruments or tools. Tools refer here to both materials tools such as smart phones, computers, dictionaries, pens and so forth, and, cultural and semiotic tools such as codes, systems of counting, genres, and registers. Vygotsky (1981) argues that mediation does not just refer to the use of tools to facilitate action to take place. Instead, he argues that tools form an inherent part of action since the type of tools and how these tools are used change the way action takes place. In other words, there is a dialectical relationship between action and the tools that are used to take this action. Wertsch (1994, 1998) therefore argues

that mediated action should be seen as one single unit of analysis, the mediated action, and not as two individual units, tool and action, that can be analyzed separately.

Within the field of MDA, the mediated action, or social action as Scollon (1998, 2001) refers to it, forms the central unit of analysis. The main focus of MDA is studying the dialectic interaction between discourse and action rather than studying these concepts in isolation. In MDA, discourse and action are always seen as in a constant dialectic relationship with each other (Scollon, 1998, 2001). Consider the following example as a way to illustrate what discourse and action are within the field of MDA and the dialectic relationship between discourse and action. A student in Thailand posts a Facebook status update from his smart phone while in class with the following text: "I'm bored". Posting this Facebook status update can be seen on the one hand as a single mediated action in which a smart phone is used as a tool to access Facebook to post the status update. On the other hand, it can also be seen as a chain of nested individual actions which include taking the phone out of his pocket, opening the Facebook app, typing in the message, editing the message and clicking 'post' to post the message. The English text of the status update "I'm bored" can be seen as the only discourse relevant in this action. However, it could also include all the other discourses that are present, such as the rules on the use of Facebook in the classroom, other Facebook posts on the time line of the student, the text books on the student's desk, the PowerPoint presentation on the overhead projector and even the discourse on the widely debated use of Facebook in Thai society. In order to prevent a reductionist approach to analyzing these individual elements, MDA focuses its attention on how all these elements mentioned above come together as a complex intersection that allows this action of posting a status update to take place. In other words, MDA focuses its analysis on how various tools and discourses enable this student to mediate this particular action of posting a Facebook status update in English in the classroom.

The dialectic relationship between discourse and action exists in how the discourse "I'm bored" is indexed a particular meaning as an inherent part of this action. In other words, the text "I'm bored", is

indexed a particular meaning in as part of this action of posting a Facebook status update, but could be indexed an entirely different meaning in a different action and mediated by different tools. This dialectical relationship exists in the use of tools as well. Tools, as Vygotsky argues, shape and change the action that takes place. Wertsch (1998) adds to this that a tool in itself is meaningless and is only indexed meaning through its mediational role in action.

This dialectical relationship between discourse and action forms an important part of MDA and Norris and Jones (2005) argue that discourse should therefore not be seen as 'action', but rather as 'discourse in action' reiterating the dialectic relationship between discourse and action. This engaged stance to discourse means that the primary focus is not solely on the discourse as a text itself, but rather on analyzing the dialectical relationship between social action and discourse.

The purpose of MDA is not just to study the mediated action as it takes place in isolation, but instead to analyze it against the backdrop of all the other practices and discourses that are present while this action takes place. In the example of the Facebook status update several other practices and discourses are co-present at this site of engagement such as listening to a lecture, taking notes, talking to friends and using a smart phone. At the same time, several discourses are present as well such as a PowerPoint presentation that is used as part of the lecture, the notes in a student's notebook, the explanation of the lecturer and so forth. Scollon (2002) argues that the purpose of this more comprehensive analysis is to see what practices and discourses are co-present at sites of engagement and how the current dialectic between discourse and action relates to, and, creates links with these other practices and discourses.

Within an MDA framework Scollon and Scollon (2003, 2004) argue that social action takes place at the intersection of the interaction order – or the social relationships between the actors in that space that the relevant discourses present in that space, and, the historical bodies – a storehouse of discourses, experiences, routines and social practices of the actors. As mentioned earlier, multiple other

discourses, practices and tools are co-present at these sites of engagement where this social action takes. Scollon (2002) and Scollon and Scollon (2004) argue that if these practices regularly intersect at this site of engagement and over time actors identify these actions as regular and routine based, they form a nexus of practice. A well-known example of a nexus of practice is that of ordering a cup of coffee (see Scollon, 2001) with all the individual actions and intersecting discourses, practices and tools, leading up to the moment of transaction of the cup of coffee. In the context of digital English literacy practices, examples of nexus of practice can be found in for instance posting Facebook status updates in English during class time by Thai student-teachers. In this example practices such as writing in English, editing a post, tagging friends, commenting and 'liking' intersect with discourses on posting on Facebook, the use of English in Thailand, the use of technology in the classroom, the larger discourse on being a student-teacher in Thailand and tools such as smart phones, mobile internet connections, skills in English and so forth. Identifying the complex intersection of practices, discourses, and tools at a nexus of practice allows for a more comprehensive analysis of not only the actions and discourses, but also how these repeated actions have formed into practices and how these practices cycle through other moments of action taken by the same actor. These ideas will be explored in more detail in the context of English language learning and teaching and the role of tools such as digital technology that allow student-teachers to engage in these actions.

### 3.3 Social action

As mentioned at the start of this chapter, the central unit of analysis in mediated discourse analysis is the mediated action. The theoretical basis of mediated action and MDA in general lies in the Vygotskian principle that all human thoughts and actions are mediated by material or cultural (psychological) tools. Building on this notion, it is argued that all mediated action is assumed to be social due to the socio-cultural situatedness of the means that mediate these actions which are all part of "a

cultural, historical and institutional setting” (Wertsch, 1998:109). Henceforth, I will refer to this concept as social action. If we take the example of the Facebook status update from the introduction of this chapter, we can see that the action of posting a status update in English is not just an action that takes place in isolation, but that it is mediated by the socio-cultural situatedness of the tools that allow this action to be taken by this student. For example, the discourses in place such as being a student-teacher in a Thai classroom, rules on the use of smart phones in the classroom, writing status updates in English as a Thai student all mediate this action. But also the personal routines of using Facebook in class and for instance the student’s routines of using a mobile application as a tool to post status updates create a situated meaning of posting this particular status update. In other words, the situatedness of this action constructs the meaning of this particular action within what Wertsch refers to as the cultural, historical and institutional setting. Since we view social action essentially as mediated, the analysis of the action will need to include the agent and the tools that are used to take, or mediate, the action (Wertsch, 1998). Scollon (2002) drawing on the work of Wertsch (1998) argues that the term ‘mediated action’ is used to emphasize what Wertsch calls the ‘irreducible tension’ between agent and mediational means. This tension refers to the fact that action and mediational means cannot be analyzed or discussed separately since the meaning of both concepts is not only produced through the dialectic interaction between them. Instead, as Scollon (2002) argues, these actions such as posting a status update in class, and the means that mediate these actions such as the discourse “I’m bored” and the tools in the form of mobile application, are essentially grounded in the material world, in this case a Thai classroom, and studying them from an abstract conceptual perspective would not adequately cover the essence of social action. However, social action and mediational means are also linked to each other in a more historical sense in that there is a developmental path that the individual agent has gone through in his appropriation of the means to mediate an action (Wertsch, 1998). The smart phone application that the student used to post the status update preceded the actual action taken with it. The student had to

learn over time how to use the application and the smart phone for this particular action and formed a history of using this particular application to post status updates. As a result, this historical trajectory of using this application slowly became part of the historical body of the student and will form a repository of experience and discourses that he can draw on the next time he posts a status update.

The primary focus of analysis within MDA is the dialectic relationship between the action and discourse (Scollon, 1999; 2001). Scollon argues that the primary focus on action allows for an observation of the dialectic relationship between discourse and action as the action is taking place and acted out by the actors rather than studying discourse as a static unit of analysis. This allows for the analysis of the process of mediation as well as the dialectic between discourse and action. In the introduction of this chapter I have already illustrated this dialectic. In the example of the Facebook status update, I showed how the discourse, "I'm bored" allows the student-teacher to post a status update and share his thoughts with hundreds of Facebook friends. At the same time, however, the action of posting a status update indexes a particular meaning to the discourse "I'm bored". This text cannot be analyzed or interpreted separately from the action of posting it as a status update since the meaning of the text will be different if it is in a dialectic relationship with a different action. The emphasis on this dialectic relationship between discourse and action allows us to study discourse not just as action, but rather as Norris and Jones (2005) argue, as discourse in action.

Since both discourse and action create historical trajectories of meaning as a result of the use by individual people and communities of language use, MDA conceives of social action as taking place at the intersection of the historical bodies of the actors, the discourses in place and the interaction order (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). The historical bodies here form a storehouse of discourses that are constructed as a result of our past and present interaction with the environment (S. Scollon, 1998, 2001; Jones, 2008). The interaction order refers here to social relationships between the actors and the role

the social actors take up in the interaction. The discourses in place refer to all the discourses which are present at this moment of action and relevant to the actors.

### 3.4 Mediatlional means

Mediatlional means are the tools or technologies that mediate our actions and these means are socio-culturally situated (Wertsch 1998). Mediatlional means are traditionally divided into externally oriented tools and internal oriented tools. The first refers to the material tools we use, what Vygotsky (1978) calls instrumental tools. The internal oriented tools refer to what Vygotsky calls psychological tools such as language, thought and cultural principles. Wertsch (1998) argues that all mediatlional means have a degree of materiality, even though this materiality is only temporary. Language, as a mediatlional means, can be for instance a printed text or semiotic sign. However, in some cases when language is spoken, for instance, the materiality is only temporarily tangible in its acoustic form unless it is recorded. However, Norris and Jones (2005) point out that the reverse is also true and argue that material means do have a mental conceptualization as well, since they function as the means to mediate our social practices and are thus sedimented in our historical bodies. Over time, people construct a historical trajectory of use with these material means and through this repeated use, mental conceptualizations form in our historical bodies on our habits and use of these tools. Scollon (2002) argues mediatlional means are best understood by seeing them in terms of a dialectic relationship between “objective materiality and psychological intramental process” (P.14) which, through their application as a means to mediate our practices, becomes appropriated into our historical bodies. In Scollon’s perspective, mediatlional means are generally seen as “objective and external givens” (Scollon, 2002: 15) which gradually become part of our historical bodies as they form meaningful entities in their dialectic relationship with the action they mediate. In this respect, the meaning these tools have formed as part of the actions an individual has taken with these tools has gradually become part of the historical

body and therefore exist in the actor and the actions rather than in the tools. This is an important notion since it allows us to study how mediational means, in dialectic interaction with action, create historical trajectories of use that can be studied through the analysis of the historical body of the actor.

For instance, the student-teacher from our earlier example has learned over time how to post status updates as a way of sharing his ideas with a larger community of people online. Through the use of Facebook, he has not only created a historical trajectory of using Facebook, but he has also built an individual mental conceptualization of what it means to him to use Facebook. These routines and the mental conceptualizations that have developed of Facebook might have been mediated by other tools as well. For instance, he might use a laptop to write longer posts for which he needs to sit down and take the time to draft and edit, whereas quick messages, like the one in the example, can be sent from his phone in situations where he might not be allowed to use his laptop.

This example illustrates another important point in the fact that the student-teacher uses English and not Thai, his first language, to post this status update. English is not just the object of study for him in his learning trajectory to becoming an English teacher, but also a tool that mediates his literacy practices in digital spaces. Using English as part of his digital literacy practices shapes and changes the way he engages in his digital literacy practices and it will also change the way in which other people at this site of engagement interact with him. The appropriation of English as a tool to engage in his digital literacy practices is something that took place over a period of time and the result of interacting with other English literacy practices and digital tools that enabled him to start posting in English on Facebook. Although the intention and motives to engage in digital English literacy practices can only be guessed, using English as a tool to engage in these digital literacy practices allows him to construct an identity as a Thai speaker of English.

This interaction between actor, action and mediational means described in the examples above allows us to account for individual differences between social actors and how each individual social

actor appropriates mediational means in their historical bodies in their own unique developmental trajectories. In the context of students and their interaction with digital technology studying the dialectic interaction between action and mediational means will provide a comprehensive framework to understand how students learned to use these tools, what these tools mean to them both for learning and other practices, and how these tools have gradually become part of their individual historical bodies and shared historical bodies.

The range of social actions we can take through the use of mediational means is not determined by the tools as such, but “originates at the point of contact between the tool and the conditions of its use” (Jones 2016: 57). Any tool that is used to take action will have affordances and constraints. Affordance can be defined as “what things are good for, based on what a user can do with them” (Gee, 2014: 16). These affordances and constraints, however, should not be interpreted as abstract concepts and self-evident but rather as seen through the potential the user has to put these affordances into action (Gee, 2014). The role of mediational means however, has broadened extensively with the rapid development of technology which allows people to mediate their practices in more and more varied ways. Digital technology has created new tools that provide different ways of taking actions. However, these different ways of mediating our practices should not be evaluated against other, more historical, ways of mediating our practices in terms of authenticity or quality of the action but they should instead be seen as a new set of configurations of affordances and constraints (Jones, 2016). In the context of digitally mediated learning practices, the view of sets of configurations of affordances and constraints can account for both the intra individual differences, the variation of use of means to take action of the same learner within different socio-cultural settings, and inter-individual differences, the variation in use of means to take action between learners within the same socio-cultural setting.

### 3.5 Sites of Engagement

Within this dynamic framework of analyzing discourse in action, MDA sees mediated action taking place at a site of engagement. This site of engagement forms a real-time window when social action takes place as discourses, social practices and the mediational means that allow people to take this action converge (Scollon, 2002). Scollon argues that the emphasis should be on how real time social action makes linkages between practices that then allow this social action to take place 'as a site of engagement' rather than at or within a site of engagement. If we look at the example of the Facebook status update, we can identify several linked practices that intersect such as typing, writing in English, tagging people, posting the message, using a smart phone, hiding a smart phone from the teacher and so forth. But also the practices of his Facebook friends should be taken into account as forming linkages at this site of engagement such as liking, responding, commenting and so forth. It is, however, the intersection of all the practices that these actors engage in that allows this action to take place at this particular time. What makes the site of engagement a comprehensive tool for analysis is the fact that the practices that actors engage in, the discourses that mediate the action, and, the tools that are used to take the action all have historical trajectories sedimented in their historical bodies that actors bring to these real-time moments of action. It is this convergence of social practices and the cultural and material tools at sites of engagement that allow people to construct shared social practices, social identities, and communities (Jones, 2005). For instance, I have been referring to the person who posted the Facebook status update as the 'student-teacher' since that is how he has structured his social identity in his interactions with me over the course of this thesis. However, this is may not be the identity he constructs at these sites of engagement in other actions. The status update could be one in a series of updates that he has sent out while in class over the last year as an act of defiance or discontent. By breaking the rule that prohibits the use of smart phones in the classroom he might construct an identity as rebel or someone who dares or likes to challenge the social order. Other

students in the classroom who notice the message might 'like' it as an act of solidarity and show their defiance, while other students may notice it but refrain from reacting since they would like to portray themselves as students who do not break the rules on smart phone use in the classroom.

### 3.5.1 Sites of engagement as a lens to analyze the production of social space

Scollon (1999, 2002) has argued that locating the place or identifying the time of a site of engagement is not the main focus of analysis. However, basic notions of space and time have become problematic in an increasingly digitally mediated world in which digital technology allows us to layer our social practices across different constructions of spaces and time scales. A good example of this can be found in the example given earlier in this chapter of the student-teacher having a Facebook conversation online while simultaneously attending a lesson in the physical classroom. The next part of this discussion will go into the basic notions of the production of space and argue that the site of engagement provides a useful lens to approach the production of space.

The foundations of the current theories on how social spaces like the classroom, the home, the work place and so forth are produced come from Lefebvre (1991) and Soja (1996). Their work emphasizes that social spaces are not just prior existing physical entities, but are rather produced by the intersecting social practices and social interactions that people in these spaces engage in (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996). Lefebvre (1991) views these social spaces, or what he calls *lived spaces*, or also referred to as third spaces, as actively produced and transformed by the social interactions and social practices of the actors. These social interactions and social practices producing these spaces are enacted through the dialectic interaction between the material or physical perception of that space (*l'espace perçu*) and the mental conception of space of the people *living* that social space (*l'espace conçu*). These produced spaces, as Lefebvre points out, are transformative and subject to different mental and physical conceptions of space and the changing practices of producing social space. Although Lefebvre's and

Soja's conceptions of social space provide a starting point for a broader spatial interpretation of how social, learning and literacy practices can be analyzed, the production of space remains an overly ideological consideration with social practices as the smallest unit of its analysis.

Sites of engagement provide an interesting alternative to analyze the production of social space. Sites of engagement do not only include the interaction between the individual discourses on space and the social practices converging at the site of engagement that ultimately produce social space, but also the mediated actions of these social practices and the means used to mediate these actions (Wertsch 1993, Scollon 1998, 2001). This makes the analysis of the production of space more fine-grained. It allows us to look at the dialectic between discourse and action as it takes place as a site of engagement while also allowing insight into the intersecting practices and the tools that are used to engage in these practices. This analysis allows us to understand how social spaces are produced as part of a mediated action in a context in which digital tools challenge current notions of space by the affordances that they create to produce simultaneous layers of social interaction.

Within Mediated Discourse Analysis notions of social space are not the primary objective of analysis, but rather a result of social action taking place in the material world and as the result of the dialectic relationship between the material world and the emplacement of social action in that material world (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). Social space is seen as conditional and produced as the outcome of a mediated action at site of engagement (Jones 2010; Scollon, 1999, 2001, 2002). Viewing the production of space through the lens of the site of engagement also includes insight into the historical trajectories of the production of space. The convergence of practices, discourses and tools at sites of engagement also provide the opportunity to trace the historical trajectories through the historical bodies of the actors.

This also creates an understanding of how actors have learned the practices and how they have learned to read and understand the meaning of the discourses in place that have produced what

Blommaert and Huang (2009) calls historical spaces. They argue that we learn over time what practices are transgressive and what practices are normative for a particular historical space. The ways we relate to other people socially within these historical spaces, the interaction order, is then result of the interaction between the historical bodies the actors bring and the historical space. Although this creates an impression that historical spaces and the practices that produce this intersection of practices have become static or stable over time, Scollon (2002) points out, that these practices are never stable and changes in the discourse or tools used to mediate action will lead eventually to changes in the social practices itself, and subsequently the social spaces and historical spaces produced at these sites of engagement.

### 3.6 Scales of time and social practices

In addition to how our actions and practices produce spaces and create networks of linked spaces, the time scales upon which these actions and practices take place are another important factor. Actions take place on varying time scales depending on the nature of the action (Scollon, 2005). Scollon argues that the cycle upon which the action place (see Scollon, 2005; Lemke, 2000 for an in-depth discussion of the different cycles). For instance, our daily activities are organized on a 24 hour cycle, with breakfast, lunch and dinner enclosing our working or school hours. At work or school, our activities are organized into smaller time frames with a three-hour lecture consisting of several shorter activities such as learning tasks, moments of explanation, a round of feedback, short presentations at the end of the lecture and so forth. All of these shorter activities are what Scollon calls 'entrained' within rhythmic pace makers. This means that the cycles upon which these actions or activities take place constrain other activities taking place on the action or activity. For instance, working hours or school going hours are constrained by our energy levels and placed within regular meals. What is important in the current discussion of the increasing digital mediation of our learning and social practices, is how this laminated

simultaneity of processes on varying time cycles is affected by the affordances that technology creates. As argued earlier, digital technology has created affordances that have relieved the restrictions on where and when we engage in our day to day activities and this has increased the laminated simultaneity of our processes. This raises the question how processes that are taking place on varying time cycles interact with another and how digital technology affects this interaction.

Lemke (2000) argues that material elements like things, people, schools are inherently stable notions and that they only receive meaning through their participation in our activities . These activities interact and form interdependent processes in eco-social networks. Lemke (2000) argues that the likeliness of activities and processes to interact and form interdependent processes, along which persons and other artifacts can participate, is not reliant on their physical proximity but rather the equivalence of the length of the timescale. Processes functioning on similar time cycles easily interact with another, whereas processes functioning on different time cycles are less likely to interact. However, semiotic artifacts such as texts, books, and objects can create connections between practices and activities functioning on different time cycles, such as the typically faster time cycles upon which classroom tasks and activities take place and the longer timescales of some of our digital practices outside the classroom. The semiotic artifacts resulting from, for instance digitally mediated practices such as chats, posts on online forums, English subtitles from movies, and so forth can produce trajectories of practices, meaningful links, between these activities functioning on various time scales. The ability to create these meaningful links and interdependence between activities on different time cycles in our social eco-systems is what Lemke (2000) refers to as heterochrony. The concept of heterochrony provides a theoretical tool that allows us to understand the ways in which tools, semiotic artifacts, discourse and action interact and create links between activities taking place on various time scales. Of particular importance for the study of literacy practices is that the notion of heterochrony also shows how re-entextualization and resemiotization of semiotic artifacts within social-ecosystems can

create linkages between processes on different cycles and sustain the practices and make meaningful semiotic connections between social spaces within social networks.

A learner can for instance watch a short five minute instructional video on YouTube on techniques for vocabulary learning with word cards. This short activity can interact with activities functioning on slower time scales such as the actual application of the technique in several rounds of vocabulary learning. The original discourse of the technique is then resemiotized into word cards which in turn can become part of a longer process of effective use as part of the vocabulary of the learner. Semiotic artifacts can then create links between these activities that function on varying time scales. However, as Lemke noted, not all semiotic artifacts create the same affordance for heterochrony to take place.

### 3.7 Nexus of practice

Throughout the second part of this chapter, I have argued that the concept of the site of engagement is an important tool in the current analysis of action, discourse and practices. As I have illustrated above, MDA sees sites of engagement as unique finite moments where practices convergence and allow action to take place. This section will introduce the concept of the nexus of practice which is formed when these sites of engagement become recognizable, regular patterns and form a network of connected practices.

A nexus of practice within the framework of mediated discourse analysis is seen as

*“a network or matrix of intersecting practices which, although they are never perfectly or inevitably linked into any finalized or finalizable latticework of regular patterns, nevertheless*

*form a network or nexus which is the basis of the identity which we produce and claim through our social actions” Scollon (2002: 16)*

A nexus of practice then involves a network of routinely linked practices that are recognizable to members of a particular social group to whom this practice is part of their historical bodies. Since these practices are situated and mediated by the discourses that mediate these practices, they are also culturally situated in the larger eco-system of practices of the members of a particular social group. This makes the nexus of practice a site upon which people construct and enact identities as members of a social group.

Take for example the Facebook status update mentioned earlier in this chapter. Posting a status update and replying to this status update are social actions that take place at a site of engagement. Suppose that this post is made on a Facebook group that all the student-teachers of year four of this teacher education program are a member of, we can see posting on this group as a nexus of practice. The student-teachers generally know how to use Facebook, how to post status updates, like posts, post pictures, links to homework, upload files and so forth. All of these practices that converge at this nexus have all formed historical trajectories of use in the historical bodies of the student-teachers. Scollon (2002) argues that the way in which student-teachers perform in these practices that converge at this nexus allows them to position themselves as members of this particular social group and enact an identity. For instance, a post like “I’m bored” tagged with the location of the classroom can position him as a person who dares to engage in transgressive practices and complain about the way they learn with a particular teacher. He would position himself as defiant in a culture in which criticizing teachers is seen as disrespectful. A student-teacher who posts a link to a learning resource, or shares an updated timetable or clarifications on homework assignments positions him or herself more as a leader, or someone who is 'in the know' of things going on within the program.

The practices that student-teachers engage in at this nexus, however, are not unique to this practice but converge in different configurations of practices at other nexus of practice. The nexus of practice forms an important tool for the analysis of discourse and action since it provides an understanding of the “the point at which historical trajectories of people, places, discourses, ideas, and objects come together to enable some action which in itself alters those historical trajectories in some way as those trajectories emanate from this moment of social action” (Scollon and Scollon, 2004: ix). This particular way of studying practices in a network of historical semiotic cycles allows us to better understand how discourse, action, tools, and practices all with their historical trajectories of use intersect at a nexus of practice and develop, change and shape the existing nexus of practice as a result of this intersection. It also allows for the tracing of particular practices and observe how they intersect with other practices, discourses, people, and objects in different nexus of practice. The methodological tool to carry out this analysis, a Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2004) will be discussed in the next section.

### 3.8 Nexus Analysis

Where Mediated Discourse Analysis provides the theoretical tools that allow us to understand the relationship between discourse, action and the tools that mediate our actions, Nexus Analysis forms the methodological approach to research the aforementioned relationship. Nexus analysis is an ethnographic approach to discourse analysis draws on a variety of research traditions and tools from various fields of study such as discourse analysis, linguistics, social studies, psychology and education. A nexus analysis is not carried out to identify a single determining motive behind a social action; instead it aims to investigate a multitude of motive statements that combined can provide an in-depth insight into nexus of practice. Within the context of research the role of digital technology in teaching and learning, mediated discourse analysis and nexus analysis form a highly suitable approach. As argued earlier in this

chapter, current approaches to research in technology and learning often place the focus of analysis on the learning outcomes, the textual analysis of accounts of the use of technology in learning and teaching, or survey-based studies tallying the frequency or attitudes to use. However, the research focus is rarely on the use of technology at the moment it mediates learning and how these moments of mediated action are situated in the wider nexus of practice. Nexus analysis allows for this comprehensive approach to studying discourse in action and includes how this mediated action is situated and relates to other actions, discourses, practices and tools in a wider networked socio-ecosystem.

In addition to analyzing the dialectic between discourse and action at the level of the site of engagement and nexus of practice, nexus analysis also analyzes the relationship between discourse and action in the nexus of practice and how these actions are grounded in the larger macro-level socio-educational and socio-political relationships and discourses in society. This way of opening up the frame of reference for analysis allows us to analyze the relationship between what Gee (2008) calls the larger big D 'Discourses' in society and the 'discourses', language in use, observed at the interpersonal level of social interactions. Whereas 'discourses' refer to those texts that mediate individual actions at the interpersonal level, Gee refers to big D 'Discourses' as the mediational means people appropriate in order to establish a situated social identity. This identity reflects the socially accepted 'doing and being' which allows a person to be accepted as a member of a specific community. Big D Discourses range across a number of situations such as medical Discourse, higher social class Discourse, working class Discourse, but also the Discourse of being Thai or British, and, teacher and student Discourse and relevant ideas capture in a Discourse on what entails information or ideas about knowledge and knowing. In order to understand the learning and teaching practices in the classroom and beyond, a good understanding of the dialectic between Discourse and action is essential. This dialectic creates a better understanding of how these practices are mediated, the role of the means that have mediated

these practices, but also how engaging in these practices produces spaces with their own dynamics, discourse on learning, knowledge, knowing and the interaction order that is normative while engaging in these practices.

Analyzing the relationship between these Discourses and social action is becoming increasingly more important in a mobile society in which digital and physical spaces and their situated identities overlap. This is particularly important when traditionally bounded spaces, such as physical classrooms, become more fluid and laminated, and, practices and discourses more easily cycle through networks of connected spaces. It is then that trajectories of discourse and action co-exist and intersect in spaces and potentially change the practices that produce this space. Since these discourses and actions are present at various scales in society, mapping the relationships between the larger discourses and actions in society at the macro level and those at the micro, interpersonal level will provide a more in-depth and comprehensive picture of the nexus of practice of digitally-mediated learning across spaces and time and reveal to what extent these actions and discourses at one level are grounded in the discourses and actions and another level.

### 3.9 Definitions of the key concepts in this study

I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion on the key concepts that this study is centered on. The central concept in this thesis is the site of engagement. I define the site of engagement as a real time moment when discourses, social practices and mediational means converge and allow action to take place. Discourse at these sites of engagement is defined as those instances at which language is used in social interaction. This perspective views discourse as a social construct which exists in a dialectic relationship with the social actions people take and the social practices people engage in. Within the same social context, I define literacy practices as those social practices that relate to how we interact, communicate and, construct identities upon our social practices. In order to engage in these

practices, people use mediational means or tools. I approach these tools or mediational means from a Vygotskyan perspective in that they are an intricate and inseparable part of the actions and practices with their individual historical trajectories of use. The last concept that plays a central role in this study is the nexus analysis. We can speak of a nexus analysis if these practices, discourses, mediational means defined above intersect at a regular interval and are recognized by the actors as such.

### 3.10 Research questions revisited

At the end of the previous chapter, I presented three general research questions this thesis aims to address. In this section I will reformulate these questions using the ideas, terms, and tools of the theoretical framework I have discussed in this chapter. This theoretical framework has provided the theoretical tools to better understand how digital technology mediates our literacy and language learning practices, when and where these actions take place, and, how these digital literacy and learning practices relate to the larger Discourses in society. This provides a comprehensive set of tools to observe, discuss, and, analyze the following research questions.

1. What are the digital literacy practices of Thai student-teachers, the discourses mediating these practices and the tools they use to engage in these practices and how does the intersection of these practices, discourses and tools allow student-teachers to create networks of relations between produced social spaces?
2. How have the digital literacy and language learning practices of these student-teachers been shaped, transformed and linked to other practices and what is the pedagogical potential of these practices for the use of teaching and learning in the classroom in particular?
3. How do the individual beliefs of the Thai-student-teachers on the role of digital technology in learning and literacy practices link and relate to the larger sets of shared beliefs on this in Thai society?

## Chapter 4: Methodology

### 4.1. Introduction

Researching discourse and action in social contexts requires a well-defined empirical and ethical approach. I would like to start this section by discussing a number of ethical considerations which are inextricably part of an engaged approach to discourse analysis before moving on to the epistemological, empirical and methodological foundations of this study.

Over the last decades, work by people like Ruth Wodak, Norman Fairclough, and, Ron and Suzanne Wong Scollon have provided us with insights on how language use and discourse form instruments of potential social power. Language has discursive power in defining the world around us. Our social practices inform the way we talk about them and these discourses subsequently mediate our actions which define and influence our social practices. Changing the way we talk about our social practices has the potential to change our social practices.

When studying social practices, the researcher creates a power position by defining and describing social practices on the basis of the data collected and interacting with the participants about these social practices. This comes with an ethical responsibility and the researcher should be well aware of his position and the social power discourse analysis brings with it. Cameron et al (1992) identify three different ways for researchers to position themselves to their participants; ethics, advocacy, and, empowerment. Ethics relates to way in which a researcher is carrying out research on participants while trying to minimize the damage and inconvenience caused to the participants. Advocacy refers to the way in which the researcher has committed himself to doing research, not only *on* the participants, but *for* the participants. In this case his expertise, status and authority are used in order to benefit the participants' cause directly or indirectly. These two ways of positioning find their epistemological grounding largely in positivism. Last, empowerment refers to the way in which a researcher does research on, for and with his or her participants. Within this study I have tried to implement the

empowerment model. This means that I carried out the research *on, for* and *with* the participants, applying interactive research tools which allowed for a collaborative account of their learning practices with the aim to empower the participants to change or improve these practices. Power and empowerment should in this situation not be seen as a linear concept which places individuals at the point of application of power but instead it should be seen within Foucault's perspective defining power as distributed and exercised across a network in which individuals are both the vehicle as well as the target of power.

#### 4.2 Epistemology: Social Constructionism

The theoretical perspectives outlined in the literature review find their epistemological foundation in social constructionism. Social constructionism is based on the notion that all knowledge and interpretations of reality are dependent on situated social practices and constructed through the interaction between humans (Crotty, 1998). The founding principles of social constructionism are based on viewing reality as an account constructed as the result of the social interaction between the actors (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). It opposes objectivist views arguing that meaning resides within objects independent of consciousness. However, it is not strictly subjectivist either, as social constructionism argues that meaning is constructed and not created. Meaning is constructed under the principle of intentionality in relation to 'something' and never in complete isolation. This means that the actions, practices and artifacts we observe are never isolated containers of meaning but instead construct meaning through the interaction they are part of.

The approaches adopted in this thesis on language use, literacy and digital literacy (Street, 1984; Barton and Hamilton, 1998; 2000, Gee 2004, 2008), the production of social space (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja, 1996; Scollon, 2001; Scollon and Scollon 2003), and, mediated action and social practices (Wertsch, 1998; Scollon, 1998, 2001) are all grounded in social constructionism. The methodology and methods

applied to collect the data are grounded in the same theories of knowledge, views on reality and knowledge construction that have informed the theoretical framework within which the data will be interpreted to ensure theoretical and epistemological consistency (Blaikie, 2000). The methodological framework in the current thesis adopts a qualitative approach in which hypotheses are seen as gradually emerging as the result of answering research questions. This approach allowed me to gain insight into the context specific discourses on notions of social interaction, learning, teaching, literacy, and, technology from participants' perspectives and inform my observations accordingly. Pre-formulated hypotheses and the subsequent testing of these hypotheses can lead to misrepresentations due to different cultural referential frameworks of the participants and the researcher.

#### 4.3 Context of the study

The idea for the current thesis comes from my own observations as a lecturer and teacher trainer at various universities in Thailand. During the ten years I have lived and worked in Thailand, mobile internet access has gone from a slow and unaffordable rarity to an intricate part of people's everyday practices, including their practices of learning. However, during numerous classroom observations, school visits and interactions with students, I have rarely seen these learning practices being put to effective use in the formal classroom. These observations prompted the question of how the out-of-class digitally mediated learning practices of students, especially those who are trained to be teachers themselves, relate to their in-class learning practices.

The choice of a Rajabhat University as my primary research site, a local community college in the center of Thailand, was based on my own experience as a lecturer and teacher trainer at this particular institution during two years of employment. Rajabhat Universities provide low cost access to undergraduate degree programs for secondary school graduates without a formal entry test screening

test. These universities have the potential to positively affect the social mobility of the provincial population as a bachelor degree forms a basic requirement for most of office and government positions.

In addition, the learning practices taking place at Rajabhat universities play an important role in shaping the educational landscape in Thailand as the majority of the teachers complete their pre-service teacher training at Rajabhats. Although it remains debatable whether the type and quality of teacher training teachers receive directly affects future teaching practices (Hattie, 2013; Lorti, 1975), studying the digitally mediated learning practices of student-teachers at a representative site provides an interesting insight into the skills with which recent graduates enter the classroom as teachers. Thus, situating the data collection at this community college provided a realistic and representative sample of the digitally literacy and learning practices of student-teachers of English. The student-teachers enrolled in this program were typically from lower-middle class to middle class backgrounds. Obtaining a bachelor degree and the prospect of entering the Thai civil service would enhance the social mobility of this particular group of student-teachers and extend benefits to their families as well.

#### 4.4 Research questions

The primary goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of the ways digital technology affects English literacy practices outside the classroom and how these digital English literacy practices relate to and create a pedagogical potential for English language learning and teaching that takes place inside the classroom. These practices were then interpreted within the wider socio-educational context and discourses on language learning and teaching, literacy, and, technology in Thailand. For methodological purposes the aims of this study were broken down into three interconnected research questions which roughly correspond to the interlinked stages of a nexus analysis. The research questions are aimed at two different levels of social interaction: the micro-interpersonal level of the student-teachers and the larger societal level in Thailand reflecting the relationships between different socio-

political groups. The first two questions relate to the interpersonal level whereas the last question refers to the dialectic relationship between these two levels. The first research question was formulated as follows:

1. What are the digital literacy practices of Thai student-teachers, the discourses mediating these practices and the tools they use to engage in these practices and how does the intersection of these practices, discourses and tools allow student-teachers to create networks of relations between produced social spaces?

Answering this question required identifying the social actions that were taken by the student-teachers as part of their learning and literacy practices, the discourses that mediated these actions, and, how technology afforded or constrained the participants in engaging in these practices. In addition, the analysis aimed at identifying the social spaces that were produced as part of opening up these sites of engagement. These observations led to the second research question which was intended to broaden the scope of the analysis by mapping how the current learning practices of the student-teachers are situated along trajectories within semiotic ecosystems. In these semiotic ecosystems, actions, discourses and mediational means all have histories leading up to the current moment and pointing towards a future which leads away from the current moment. The second research question was formulated as follows:

2. How have the digital literacy practices of the student-teachers been shaped transformed and linked to other practices and what is the pedagogical potential of these practices for the use of teaching and learning in the classroom particular?

Central to this stage of the study was to find out how these digitally mediated learning practices, and the discourses and mediational means implicated in them were linked link and how they were

shaped and transformed along these trajectories they traversed. This was done by mapping the semiotic cycles of the actions, discourses and the historical bodies of the student-teachers leading up to and away from these intersections. Tracing these itineraries helped identify the literacy practices that formed part of the nexus of practice and provided insight into their linkages to other practices and nexus of practice. It also allowed me to observe how literacy practices were being developed leading up to that moment in time, and, their interaction with other practices along these trajectories.

This stage also provided insight into how covert, or overt, the discourses in place were, and, to what extent the student-teachers foregrounded or backgrounded certain discourses. Finally, it created insight into the role of digital technology as a tool to mediate their practices. This allowed me to observe how, when, and, where student-teachers used digital technologies as tools to mediate their learning and literacy practices or refrained from using them . This led up to the final research question , which intended to find out how social action at the micro-interpersonal level was grounded in the larger discourses and relationships between socio-political groups in society. The research question addressed here was:

3. How do the individual beliefs of the Thai-student-teachers on the role of digital technology in learning and literacy practices link and relate to the larger sets of shared beliefs on this in Thai society.

This stage was carried out by combining the findings from the analysis of the first and the second research questions. The discourses and practices found in the nexus of practice were traced along semiotic trajectories moving from the classroom through several administrative levels of the Thai education system in a process that Scollon and Scollon (2004) call circumferencing. This analysis was done to provide insight into the social power relations between the micro interpersonal level reflected in the social actions and discourses in the nexus of practice and the larger societal level reflected in what

Gee (2008) calls 'big D Discourses'. This revealed the social power relationships between socio-political groups such as the Ministry of Education, the university administration, the Faculty of Education, the teachers, and, the student-teachers and their prospective students.

#### 4.5 Theoretical perspectives on methods and data collection

Researching digital social and literacy practices of learners across social spaces requires a methodology that takes the complexity and multifaceted nature of these practices into account. I identified three conditions that formed a framework within which the data collection was carried out. First, the methodology needs to find its foundation in social constructionism and view language use, learning and literacy development as part of the participants' social practices. Second, the methodological approach and the methods used for data collection need to allow for, and, be sensitive to the observation of digital social and literacy practices not only in physical spaces but also in the digital social spaces these practices produce. Finally, the methodological approach needs to account for the dialectic relationship between the social practices at the micro level and the social practices within a larger societal context.

##### 4.5.1 Nexus analysis

Nexus Analysis (Scollon and Scollon, 2004) is an ethnographic approach to studying discourse which finds its theoretical grounding in mediated discourse theory (Scollon 1999, 2002). Following Green and Bloom (1997), a nexus analysis cannot be classified as a stereotypical form of 'ethnography', or what they refer to as 'doing ethnography' in which one social group is intensively studied over a longer period of time, instead it should be seen as an ethnographic approach to do research which takes social action as the central unit of analysis rather than a group, culture or class (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). A nexus analysis aims at describing and gaining broader insight into the historical trajectories of people,

places, discourses, objects and ideas as they come together to enable social action which subsequently transforms all of the aforementioned elements. Thus, it situates social action at the intersection of the participants' habitus, the interaction order and the discourses in place.

This approach creates two methodological affordances. First, studying the dialectic relationship between social action and discourse at this intersection includes an analysis of the social space in which the site of engagement is situated. Alternative analyses, in which more decontextualized approaches to discourse analysis are applied, are less comprehensive and cannot account for the social spaces produced as part of our social actions and practices as an integral part of the analysis. Second, discourse as a term can refer to both discourses at the level of interpersonal social interaction, "little d" discourses, and the discourses and relationships between social groups and power relations at a larger societal level, "big D" discourses (Gee, 2008).

An important part of a nexus analysis is mapping the semiotic cycles leading up to and away from the social action. This then creates insight into how the actions and discourses at one level are grounded in another and vice versa. Scollon and Scollon (2004) argue that this makes mediated discourse analysis, and nexus analysis as one of its methodological tools, a versatile tool to study social issues. Larger societal issues are, as Scollon and Scollon argue, ultimately grounded in micro-level social interactions and discourses whereas, at the same time, the micro actions of social interactions form a nexus of practice through which the larger Discourses on language learning and literacy in society are circulated.

#### 4.5.2 Data collection from a mediated discourses analysis perspective

According to Jones (2011), data collection and transcription from a mediated discourse analysis perspective should be seen as the situated research practices associated with particular disciplinary communities. One of the most important aspects of these practices is the process of entextualization, in

which researchers transform actions and discourse into new actions and discourses using various mediational means. These mediational means are not restricted to material means, such as technologies of entextualization (Jones, 2010) like tape recorders and video cameras, but also include the thoughts, ideas and cultural practices of the researcher. This approach was also adopted for the current research. Data collected through mediational means was not seen as an act of reproducing actions and discourses but as re-entextualizing actions and discourses.

For instance, throughout the data collection I made sure that I analyzed my observations of the literacy practices and social interactions of the student-teachers on the basis of the socio-cultural framework that is normative for Thailand and not one that is normative of my own educational or socio-cultural background. Understanding the situated nature of these literacy practices became very important during the focus group interviews. For instance, the elicitation of how they engaged in English literacy practices and the use of digital technology was often not a problem. However, getting the student-teachers to communicate their opinion about the discourses on the use of technology in the classroom and the ways in which digital technology was used by lecturers was far more complex since this opened up an avenue to criticize or critique lecturers and the education system which is often not the norm and in some cases frowned upon in Thailand. Drawing on my own professional experience of working in Thailand, I knew that in certain cases when students avoid answering questions this did not automatically mean that student-teachers did not have an opinion about this. It just meant that I had to look for other tools to elicit these critical thoughts and that the tools that I used might have led to a biased answer. A very productive tool in this case was to listen to the discussions that took place between the student-teachers during the focus group interviews. During these interactions they often shared ideas with each other in Thai and once I carefully asked them to elaborate on some of the points they mentioned to each other, discussions on more sensitive issues became less complicated.

## 4.6 Steps in a Nexus Analysis

At a practical level, a nexus analysis comprises three stages; engaging the nexus, navigating the nexus and changing the nexus. As nexus analysis is an engaged form of discourse analysis, these three analytical tasks can only be carried out if the researcher establishes a zone of identification in which he can take a place in the nexus as a legitimate participant. I have organized the remainder of this section according to these three stages. I describe the tasks that were carried out during each stage, the data that was collected, the instruments that were used for the data collection, and, the type of analysis used to analyze the data.

### 4.6.1 Engaging the nexus of practice

The first stage of a nexus analysis is engaging the nexus of practice. This is a preliminary stage in which the researcher explores the nexus to firmly establish the social actions which are part of the research, identify participants, the mediational means, the scene of the nexus analysis, and, observe the interaction order along with the most significant cycles of discourses. In addition, engaging the nexus aims to establish a zone of identification. The zone of identification is that particular zone in which the researcher can take a place within the nexus which allows for up-close observation of the nexus and social interaction with the actors in the nexus. Identity management as a legitimate participant in that zone is crucial as it determines the access to the site, the participants' interpretation of the researcher's identity, and thus the effectiveness and truthfulness of the interaction with the participants. Fielding (2008) argues that becoming a legitimate participant depends on both overt and covert approaches to participation and can never be done solely on overt and faithfully negotiated access. Furthermore, participants' interpretation of the researcher's identity is not only based on the active identity work done during focused interaction but also heavily influenced by observations made during unfocused interaction (Tewksburry and Gagne, 1997). During the data collection I positioned myself as an outsider,

a PhD student, who has an interest in Thai education and as someone who has substantial knowledge of Thai language and culture. The ways in which I have managed and constructed my identity as a legitimate participant is described in more detail in section 4.6.2.3 below.

#### 4.6.2 Entering the nexus of practice

The main data collection for the study took place from July to December 2015. The process of establishing contact with the research site and the participants started in October 2014. The last contact with the participants took place in September 2016 as part of a reflection on the findings from the data collection.

##### 4.6.2.1 Establishing contact with the research site

Access to the research site was negotiated through a series of steps which illustrated the complexity of the social relationships and the social hierarchy at this university. In October 2014, I informally explored the opportunities to do my fieldwork at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University (NSRU). I worked at this university from 2008-2009 and I maintained contact with several people after my departure. From my own teaching experience I knew the potential of this university as a research site. However, I also knew the complexity of the administrative hierarchy and that requests for access and permission for data collection needed time and a plan of action that was sensitive to both the social and administrative hierarchy.

The first person I contacted was Ajarn D<sup>1</sup> who, later on in the process, agreed to become my patron at NSRU during my data collection. During the course of my PhD studies, she was an administrator, teacher and researcher, and, had carried out ethnographic fieldwork for her own PhD at this university. She maintained good relationships with the student-teachers and taught English

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<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym

proficiency courses to first and second year B.Ed. student-teachers. She typically fulfilled the role of what Lee (1993; as cited in Tewksbury and Gagne 1997) calls a 'patron' and helped to foster relationships and trust between me and the student-teachers, lecturers and administrators in the faculty of education.

I contacted Ajarn D in October 2014 through an informal email explaining that I was looking for sites to do my fieldwork. She indicated that she was willing to explore the possibilities within NSRU at various administrative levels. We met at the end of October 2014 in person at NSRU and during the months after our meeting, Ajarn D mentioned my intentions to the vice president for academic affairs<sup>2</sup> on several occasions. Although I knew the vice president, as he and I once co-taught a course in teaching methodology, I thought it was inappropriate to contact him directly due to his current position as vice president. I knew, however, that he was supportive of classroom-based and learning-oriented research. In the spring of 2015, I was informed that he was supportive of my plans and I sent a formal request by email after which he approved my request for data collection. This request was subsequently approved by the President, the Dean of the Faculty of Education, the Head of the English department and the teachers. Several meetings were held to build up a good working relationship with all the stakeholders involved. The vice-president facilitated developing this working relationship by articulating my personal connection to him, to the university, and, that in the past I was "with them" for two years. This was an important part of validating my social relationships with the teachers, some of whom are former student-teachers from 2009. These actions and the discourses that mediated them can be interpreted as what Fielding (2008) calls overt and covert approaches to becoming a legitimate participant. The emphasis placed on the social relationships I maintained with individual members and my former employment further facilitated the process of becoming a legitimate participant.

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<sup>2</sup> Name is withheld intentionally

#### 4.6.2.2 Establishing contact with the participants

In July, 2015 I met with the lecturers again and we discussed a plan to contact the student-teachers. One lecturer <sup>3</sup> had been tasked by the department to facilitate the communication with the student-teachers. As it was term break and the student-teachers were not on campus, I decided to create a short video to introduce myself to them and to ask them to participate in my research. In this video, I actively positioned myself as a PhD student to create common ground with the participants and to show that I can relate their experiences and share my own experiences. The video was about my life as a PhD student in Hong Kong and functioned as a tool to facilitate the interaction during the first meeting. The lecturer sent the link to the video to all fourth year student-teachers of the B.Ed. in English program with a brief translation of my study and the request to participate.

Over the course of two weeks 17 student-teachers signed up from two classes. At the end of July, I arranged an introductory meeting with the participants. During these meetings, I explained a bit about myself and my study, and, I gave the participants ample time to ask questions about me and the project. Although they were a bit shy at first, they soon started asking a number of questions ranging from very general questions such as “can you eat Thai food?” to more personal questions such as “are you married?” and “do you have kids?”. This question and answer sequence allowed the student-teachers to go through their usual routines when getting to know a new person and provided me with valuable cues on how they would see my positioning toward them. This quickly resulted in the participants calling me by my first name rather than using the predicate “Ajarn”, Thai for lecturer, or “khun”, Thai for mister. Participants who decided after this meeting to participate in this study signed consent forms for all the data collected as part of this study which involved direct or indirect participation of the participants such as observations, focus group interviews, visual images, and, other tasks involving data that could possibly identify participants (See Appendix A).

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<sup>3</sup> Name withheld intentionally

#### 4.6.2.3 Positioning as a Legitimate Participant

For the current research, my identity work needed to result in an assumed researcher identity which did not deceive the participants but which also did not unnecessarily accentuate differences which might hinder interaction with the participants. For the Thai context, three important aspects played a role; my past employment as a teacher, my ethnic origin, and, my knowledge of Thai culture and language. In the Thai education system, Thai school teachers and university lecturers are presumed to hold positions of both authority and moral superiority. This is a remnant of a period in which monks were the principal educators in Thailand occupying a position which yielded both respect for being representatives of the Buddhist religion and being knowledgeable in their own right (Howard, 2008; Jones, 2010). For foreign lecturers, these notions of moral superiority and respect are complex concepts to deal with. White foreigners (collectively and often pejoratively referred to as 'farang') are not expected to share the same Thai moral and cultural values, but are expected to be sensitive to and abide by some cultural precepts. This is an arduous task since some of these potentially sensitive cultural precepts are ambiguous even to Thai people. This ambiguous position of the foreign lecturer in Thailand comes with certain affordances and constraints, but obscures the relationship between foreign lecturers and student-teachers.

In order to circumvent these ambiguous and complex social structures, I had to actively disassociate myself from the identity of being a lecturer. I positioned myself as an outsider who is currently a PhD student, and not a lecturer, but also as someone who has a fair understanding of Thai culture, education and language. I communicated this information with the participants and emphasized the fact that I could speak Thai and that I had lived in Thailand for a long time. I actively corrected student-teachers when they accidentally used the Thai word for lecturer, 'Ajarn', to refer to me and insisted they call me by my first name. My experience with the Thai education system also allowed me

to avoid typical teacher behavior, such as formal student – teacher greetings, which could further accentuate the existing cultural, age and language differences between the participants and me.

Tewksbury and Gagne (1997) argue that potential differences between the participants and the researcher can be downplayed by emphasizing similarities. They argue that the research process might be enhanced when similar experiences are carefully communicated. I actively emphasized similarities in my interaction with the student-teachers such as being a student, albeit at a different level, and, that I am also in the process of learning a language, Thai. At the same time, I also de-emphasized my role as a former teacher which was going to be important during classroom observations for both lecturers and the student-teachers.

Two factors played an important role in this process. First of all, the lecturers whose classes I was observing might have interpreted the presence of a foreigner in the classroom as a threat to their authority. Before the observations started, I made it clear to the lecturers that the main focus of observation was student-teachers' learning behavior and that I was not observing their performance as lecturers. Second, my presence in the classroom could have made the participants in my sample feel uneasy. I therefore tried to be explicit in my commitment to the student-teachers and assured them that my observations in the classroom and outside the classroom would not be discussed with the administration or the lecturers. In order to emphasize this commitment, I limited my interaction with the lecturers and non-teaching staff on campus as much as I could, and when it was necessary, I made sure it was as covert as possible. This strategy, however, did lead to different ways of communicating with both lecturers and student-teachers in which I had to engage in different discourse practices. In addition, I sat at the back of the classroom with the student-teachers and I reduced my interaction with the lecturer to a minimum. At the end of every observation, I made sure I left the classroom with the student-teachers and not with the lecturer. I informed the lecturers of this strategy in advance. Also, for

the same reason, I did not take up a workspace at the faculty or spent a lot of time in the lecturer's room.

Another sensitive aspect of managing my assumed identity was attire. Thai lecturers usually dress in semi-formal business attire and foreign lecturers are expected to follow this example. Student-teachers are required to wear their university uniforms with a white shirt, university tie and black slacks for the male student-teachers and, a skirt for the female student-teachers. The uniform requirements are strictly enforced and part of the student-teachers' academic assessment. My attire during the focused and unfocused interactions needed to satisfy the formal dress culture of the university but I wanted to distance myself from the identity of a teacher. As a compromise, I wore dress trousers dissimilar to the standard black trousers worn by the lecturers, and dress polo shirts instead of the button down shirts and ties. I also avoided wearing formal business shoes and often wore casual sneakers or semi dress shoes.

#### 4.6.3 The student-teachers in the nexus

The primary group of participants, which formed the starting point for observation, was a group of seventeen, fourth year, undergraduate student-teachers; fifteen female and two male. Although there is a clear gender imbalance in this group of participants, this is representative of the proportion of male and female students on the program. There tended to be fewer male student-teachers in this particular major. The participants were enrolled in the English program at the Faculty of Education. Generally, they were from lower-middle class to middle class backgrounds. The choice for this particular group of student-teachers was suggested by my patron at the university, Ajarn D, on the basis of their English language skills and the type of courses they took during that semester. The fourth year student-teachers took courses involving new media, technology and pedagogical skills development during the first term. This allowed me to observe a wider variety of possible digital literacy events. The choice for

the number of student-teachers was based on my own observations during my employment at the university. Thai students often form small social groups during their time at university in addition to individual friendships. The group sizes usually vary between three and five people. Including three of these social groups would provide a manageable number of participants for both observation and focus group interviews. During the introductory meeting they quickly divided themselves into three groups and opened up a group on the messaging service Line to stay in touch with me. These groups were based on existing social relationships and I did not intervene in how these groups were made.

Table 1. Over view of participating student-teachers. Names are pseudonyms.

Name (pseudonym)	Age	Gender	Language proficiency	Hometown
Class 1, Group 1				
Som	21	Female	High	Province
Jan	21	Female	Low	Province
Jenny	22	Female	High	City
Noon	21	Female	High	City
Tian	21	Female	Low	Province
Bank	22	Male	High	Province
Class 1, Group 2				
Nu	22	Female	Low	Province
Toey	21	Female	Middle	Province
Mink	22	Female	Middle	Province
Mai	21	Female	Low	Province
June	21	Female	Low	Province
Class 2, Group 3				
Noi	21	Female	Middle	City
An	21	Female	High	Province
Tik	22	Female	High	Province
Cherry	21	Female	Middle	City
May	22	Female	Middle	Province
Bom	21	Male	High	City

Although some of the participants came from the city, the majority were from a range of small towns and villages as far as 150 kilometers from the university in Nakhon Sawan province, as well as, the surrounding provinces of Kamphaeng Phet, Uthai Thani, Pitsanulok, Pichit, and Chainat. One student-teacher was from a city in the northeast of the country about 700 kilometers from the university. The

majority of the student-teachers stayed in the university dormitories, private dormitories or lived with relatives in the city. Some of them lived with their parents and commuted on a daily basis to the university by bus, train or car. The participants related to each other in several ways. Some knew each other from before they joined the university; others had met each other at the university. Some shared rooms together whereas others lived with their parents.

All of the participants had a mobile device, ranging from tablets to smart phones, with an internet data connection. They all had multiple social media accounts with Line, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter being the most popular social media platforms. Despite being divided over two classes, all student-teachers were Facebook friends and the majority followed each other on Twitter or Instagram. All participants belonged to several university related Facebook groups and Line groups. In addition to the official university Facebook groups to which their lecturers were also added, they were also part of several 'secret' Facebook groups which were used typically for communication about classes, lecturers, the program and so forth that they did not want their lecturers to be part of.

The participants' English language proficiency levels varied widely. Without providing a formal assessment of their skills, their proficiency levels could be divided roughly into three groups with seven student-teachers forming the top of the class, five in the middle, and, five the bottom. The top seven student-teachers were communicatively competent in English and interaction with them was straightforward without frequent breakdowns in communication. They often translated for other participants and helped them answer questions. The middle group of about five participants performed better on receptive skills than productive skills. This meant they were able to follow most of the conversations and questions but they needed help in answering their questions, or, used Thai instead. The other five student-teachers had problems following the general line of the focus group interviews, and could not communicate in English without frequently using Thai phrases or answering the question

solely in Thai. This group also needed a lot of support from the other group members to understand the gist of questions.

#### 4.6.4 The lecturers in the nexus

Four lecturers allowed access to their classroom for observations, two Thai lecturers and two foreign lecturers. Another three Thai lecturers were willing to be interviewed in addition to my patron, Ajarn D, and the vice president. The Thai lecturers on the program were both junior lecturers with three to five years of teaching experience on this program. Their English language teaching experience ranged from six months as part of their teaching practice of their own undergraduate program to two years at private schools. The English abilities of the lecturers were generally low which was evidenced by frequent breakdowns in communication. As a result, large parts of the interviews were done in Thai. The foreign lecturers, Ajarn S and Ajarn A were two native speakers of English with both 15-20 years of teaching experience of teaching English. They were not part of the Faculty of Education, but rather employed through the Language Center and tasked with teaching both language courses and subject courses for the B.Ed. student-teachers.

#### 4.6.5 The research site in the nexus

The majority of the data collection was carried out on the campus of a local community college, Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University (NSRU), situated in central Thailand. NSRU is the primary provider of teacher education in the province of Nakhon Sawan and one of the 41 Rajabhat Universities in Thailand with a student body of around 8,000 full-time students. Rajabhats form a representative site for observation as the majority of the Thai lecturers complete their pre-service training at one of the 54 Rajabhat universities in Thailand.

As regards the geographical location, Nakhon Sawan province is a gateway to the north and has traditionally formed a trading hub, being located at the confluence of four major rivers connecting the north and northeast with Bangkok. The role of English is relatively limited in the province as there is little to no international tourism. Nakhon Sawan is an agricultural province which relies heavily on the production of rice and sugar cane. Large rice mills and sugar-processing factories, traditionally run by Thai-Chinese businessmen and trade families, form the connection between the farmers and international exporters thus greatly reducing the necessity to use English for the majority of the farmers. Besides online media, there is little to no exposure to English in student-teachers' daily lives.

#### 4.6.5.1 The Bachelor of Education English Program

The student-teachers were enrolled on the Bachelor of Education program and majoring in English. This is a five year undergraduate program that provides four years of course work with an additional one year of teaching practice through internships at local schools. The program comprises 167 credits spread out over five years. Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the course credits.

**Table 2: Course credit breakdown Bachelor of Education Program**

Area	Courses	Credits
<b>General education</b>	Language and Communication	9
	Humanities	7
	Social studies	6
	Science and technology	10
<b>Major courses</b>		

<b>Pedagogy</b>	Core courses	31
	Electives	6
	Practicum/internship	14
<b>Electives within the field of education</b>		78
<b>Free electives</b>		6
<b>Total</b>		178

The majority of the courses are taught by lecturers from the Faculty of Education. However, the English language proficiency courses and various other courses are outsourced to the Foreign Language Department at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Language Center. The Language Center employs five non-Thai lecturers. Student-teachers take an average of 40 credits per year, or 20 credits per semester. This is the equivalent of six to seven courses per semester and usually one of these courses is taught by a foreign lecturer from the Language Center.

#### 4.6.6 Data collection in engaging the nexus of practice

Engaging the nexus for this study consisted of four mutually supporting tasks which aimed at gaining a better understanding of the literacy practices of the student-teachers, the tools they used to engage in these practices and how these practices formed links between the various social spaces. The main focus of analysis was the mediated action taken by the student-teachers. Scollon (2001) identifies four individual but mutually supportive methodologies to determine the key mediated actions in a particular site of study: participant and mediational means surveys, scene surveys, events, and focus groups. These four methodologies triangulate the data and bring together four perspectives on the

mediated actions under investigation in order to arrive at the participants' definition of the nexus of practice. They include members' generalizations, neutral objective observations, individuals' experience, and interactions with members (Scollon, 2001; Scollon and Scollon, 2004).

#### 4.6.6.1 Participant and mediational means surveys

Participant and mediational means surveys are preliminary investigations done in order to establish a research site and identify the tools used to mediate social actions. I was familiar with the research site and the participants of this study as a result of my past working experience in Thailand as a teacher trainer, and, through previous contact with my patron in October and December, 2014. In order to remain up to date with the current discourses on education and teacher education in Thailand and any recent initiatives involving the use of technology in the classroom, I collected additional documentation from July – December 2015 such as articles from relevant newspapers (8 articles), government documentation on the curricula and Rajabhat universities (Basic Core Curriculum and the B.Ed. English Rajabhat curriculum), and other initiatives involving educational technology within Thailand.

#### 4.6.6.2 Scene surveys

Scene surveys are carried out to narrow down the site for observations of the nexus of practice and identify the places in which social actions take place, the historical bodies and the interaction order of the participants. In this study I made use of three instruments.

##### 4.6.6.2.1 General documentation

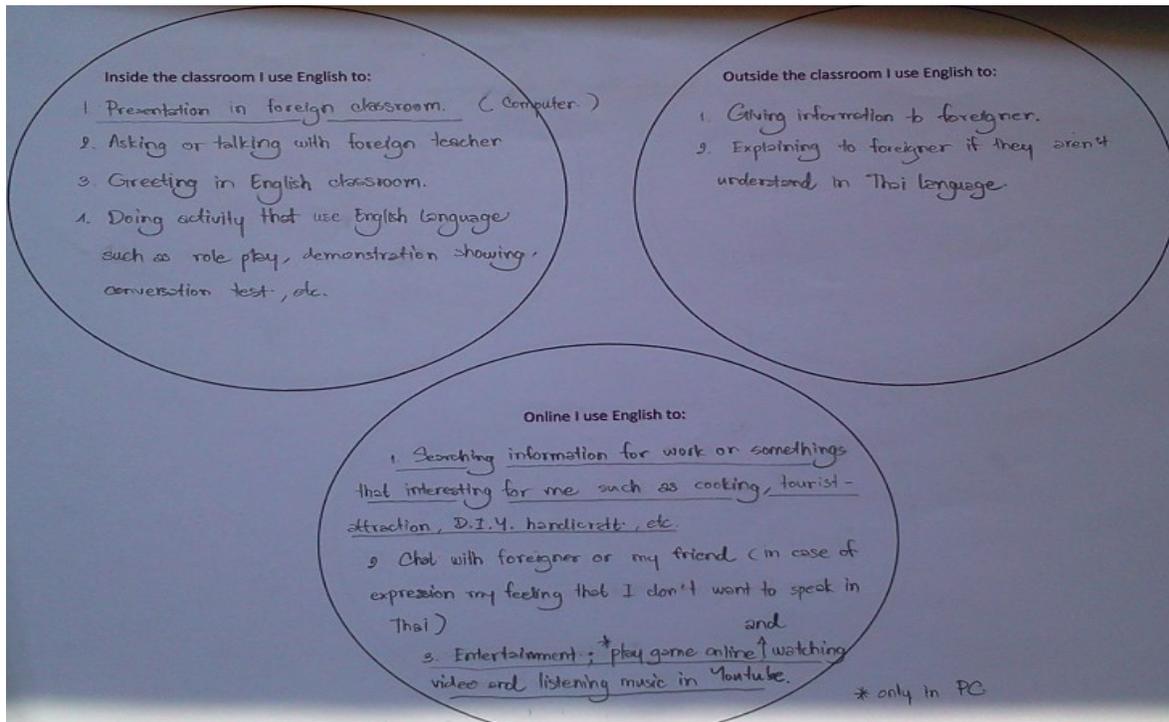
I collected documentation on the B.Ed. curriculum, academic schedule, course descriptions, handouts, and samples of previous learning materials evidencing the type of learning tasks, projects and other activities. This provided insight into which classes were good opportunities to observe digital literacy events. From this information I selected four courses to be observed: Media and Activities for

Learning English Language, Skills Development through English Camp, English Learning through Drama, and, Instruction of English with Computers. In addition, I actively engaged in informal conversations with lecturers and student-teachers to corroborate the findings from the course documentation on learning and teaching activities that were mentioned in official course documentation.

#### 4.6.6.2.2 Mapping spaces

In addition to the general documentation collected, I carried out an English language map task to understand better how physical and digital spaces were associated by the student-teachers with English language use and their use of digital technology in these spaces. The task showed three circles with three prompts: 'Inside the classroom I use English to...' 'outside the classroom I use English to...' and 'online I use English to...'. The term 'online' was used as I often heard student-teachers often refer to social media and internet-related practices as taking place 'online'. This term was also used in Thai 'ออนไลน์' which is pronounced similar to the English 'online'. Student-teachers wrote down in each circle what they used English for in these spaces. After this, student-teachers underlined the practices both inside and outside the classroom that involved some form of digital technology. Figure 1 provides an example of a completed English language map task.

Figure 1. Completed English language map task by a participant



This information provided insight into the participants' historical bodies and was later used as a stimulus for focus group interviews on spatial aspects of English literacy events and digitally mediated language practices. On the basis of this data, I narrowed down my observations of the relationship between the use of English in interaction in the different contexts. In addition, I was able to get a participant perspective on the use of English for certain actions and the use of digital technology in performing these actions. This data was combined with the data from event action surveys to create insight into the mediated actions taking place in these spaces.

#### 4.6.6.2.3 Observations

On the basis of the information collected about the courses, I selected a number of classes for non-participant observation of learning events in a formal classroom setting. The observations provided a source of data for three aims. First of all, it allowed the observation of digitally mediated learning

practices, digital literacy events and English language learning events. Second, the data provided information on the interaction order of the participants, both lecturers and student-teachers. Third, repeated observations provided information on the learning related routines of the participants in particular spaces, and, supplemented the data collected on the participants' historical bodies.

The classroom observations were carried out through negotiated access to the classroom. Every observation was negotiated and scheduled with the respective lecturer at least 48 hours prior to the observation. Before every observation, I briefly met with the lecturer to establish a social interaction and to get a good idea of what the current context of the lesson was, i.e., was the lecturer stressed, were they under a tight time schedule, how did they see the student-teachers at the moment, and, what did they have planned for this particular lesson. I would then enter the classroom with the lecturer and position myself at the back or on the side of the room in a position from which I could overlook the whole classroom but from where student-teachers, generally seated in rows, could hardly notice me. The hours of observations were spread over four courses taught by two Thai lecturers, (Media and Activities for Learning English Language and Instruction of English with Computers), and two foreign lecturers (Skills Development through English Camp and English Learning through Drama). The courses were all taught in different buildings and different types of classrooms. Observations took place at regular intervals from August 8<sup>th</sup> to November 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015. A total of 39 hours of lessons were observed over 12 observations. For each observation field notes were taken with a focus on mediated actions by student-teachers and lecturers, the discourses in place, and, the mediational means that were used to take these actions.

I supplemented the field notes with pictures and videos whenever this was appropriate. For traditional lectures, it was less appropriate to take pictures as an observer without drawing the attention to myself. Therefore, I took pictures in a way quite similar to the way student-teachers would take pictures of PowerPoint slides. I took pictures to capture the discourses in place, learning materials,

and, moments capturing the atmosphere of the classroom. The social actions taking place were less dynamic and therefore easier to record through field notes. However, during peer teaching demonstrations and drama performances it was more appropriate to take pictures and videos since it blended in well with the practices of the student-teachers who took ample pictures and videos in class.

On several occasions, I wore a wearable camera that took still images every 30 seconds of the actions taking place directly in front of me. The images taken in the classroom as well as those from the wearable camera did not only provide insight into the actions taking place at that particular time, but also into the 'frozen actions', the material evidence that a social action has taken place (Norris, 2004; 2016). These frozen actions inform us of those actions that have previously taken place and of which the picture captures the material evidence that this action has taken place in the past. This is of importance in the case of studying literacy development and the various literacy practices that are co-present at moments of action. For instance, a picture of a smart phone on which there are search results visible in Thai, is a frozen action of an earlier action in which a Google search was done using Thai keywords rather than English keywords. These frozen actions formed an effective tool in tracing the literacy practices across the social spaces in which the students engaged in these practices.

I made alternative observations outside the classroom by occasionally joining the participants for lunch or other social gatherings. The observations were done ad hoc, spread over the semester whenever the opportunity arose. For instance, I joined the student-teachers for coffee after class or I would sit with them for a while after a lesson observation. This way of observing student-teachers' social interactions and practices was done to collect data from various perspectives on the same situation and to limit the intrusion of their personal lives. The findings and analysis of the observations were discussed with the participants to cross-check their validity in focus group interviews. The observations I did both inside and outside the classroom also provided insight into the interaction order of the participants.

#### 4.6.6.3 Event action surveys

Event action surveys were carried out to identify the mediated actions taking place in the nexus of practice. As described above, identifying digital literacy practices was partly done through classroom observations and observing social events. This form of data collection is limited since the primary focus of observation is on observing the actions and practices as they unfold in real time. Therefore, a form of wearable technology was used to take still images which reflected actions from the participant's point of view. The still images were taken by equipping participants with a wearable camera that clipped onto the participant's lapel or placket of their uniform. The camera took a picture every 30 seconds and this allowed for the mapping of the place and time of the type of action as well as the semiotic context in which the action took place. This provided insight into what forms of mobile technology were used by whom and the ways in which the participants used these mobile devices i.e., sitting, standing or walking. It also provided further information on the discourses in place and the semiotic artifacts that surrounded the participant at the time of action.

The images and the geographical location information served two purposes for further analysis. First, they were used as a stimulus during focus group interviews to corroborate information. Second, the data was used as a vital source of information for the next stage of data collection and analysis: navigating the nexus. During this stage the information from the still images complemented and corroborated the data from other sources when tracing the trajectories of the historical bodies of the participants, the discourses in place, and, the interaction order between the participants.

#### 4.6.6.4 Ethical considerations on the use of wearable technology

The student-teachers were informed and shown the camera the first time during the introduction meeting and I explained during the meeting that I would be wearing the camera at certain times as part of the data collection. In addition, consent was given for the collection of visual data in the

classroom by both the University and the National Research Council Thailand (NRCT). In total 4,300 still images were collected over two days of use by the participants and five days by me as an observer in the classroom. I introduced the camera only later on in the data collection as I felt I needed to establish a better relationship with the participants before they were ready to allow me a visual insight into their lives. I gauged their readiness to share information with me through simple hints such as their willingness to show me a Facebook post or twitter post on their phones. Once they started doing that, I started wearing the camera during observations.

As I started wearing the camera in class, student-teachers' developed an interest in it and I explained what it was before handing it to them to try it out. Despite the significance of the data for my research, I tried to present it to the participants as 'a gadget' to de-emphasize the 'special' nature of it so that the participants would not get excited by the use of it and act differently. I explained how it was used by people as a tool for life blogging and I showed some of the still images I had from my own use on my phone. I also referred to some of the still images that I used in the introduction video and explained that they came from the same device. Before the student-teachers started wearing the camera, it was made clear to them that it was part of the data collection and that the data from the camera was going to be part of the analysis.

As part of the protocol to maintain the participants' privacy, they were given first access to the data after wearing the camera clip and were free to delete any pictures they did not wish to disclose, without stating a reason. After wearing the camera the participants returned with the camera and I connected the camera to the computer. All pictures were then downloaded onto the hard disk of the computer and automatically erased from the camera as part of the download process. The participants were then left alone to select the images they did not want to include as part of the data for this study. These were then permanently removed from the computer.

From an ethical point of view, the wearable camera as a tool to elicit data has a number of advantages over the closest alternative, personal observation by the researcher. First of all, the presence of a researcher following and observing participants throughout a prolonged period of time could be invasive and possibly influence the routines and practices of the participants. A wearable camera records the social actions and practices in a relatively unobtrusive manner without the need for the researcher to be present at all times. Second, the data recorded with the wearable cameras can function as a tool to elicit data during focus group interviews. Still images provided an objective account to reconstruct an event than the researcher's subjective description of the observation. In order to prevent any form of priming in their reconstruction of the accounts, I provided the still images without my initial interpretation of it. This is important as the researcher and the participants do not share the same frame of reference coming from different cultural backgrounds.

#### 4.6.6.5 Legal considerations on the use of wearable technology

This type of data collection, however, came with ethical and legal considerations since it involved automatically collecting a large amount of visual data of participants through a device which could not directly be identified as a camera. In addition, if the wearable camera was used without proper instructions it may take pictures which could have resulted in a breach of privacy. The Hong Kong SAR personal data privacy ordinance <sup>4</sup>states that photographs can be taken of individuals in public spaces as long as it does not constitute 'collection'. Collection is then defined as the systematic collection of personal data about an identified person or a person whom the collector seeks to identify (Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data Protection, 2010). The Thai law, applicable as the research site was located in Thailand, does not differ in its approach to the collection of visual data for research purposes.

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<sup>4</sup> Data collection for this study was carried out during my enrollment as a PhD student at City University of Hong Kong.

Since compilation of personal data about an identified person took place, the participants all signed a release form in order to use this data for further analysis (see Appendix B). However, it was impossible to limit the recording of still images to participants only. As a result of the use of the camera, data was collected on incidental bystanders. However, since it was not the intention to compile personal data about bystanders with the aim to identify them the recording of still images that incidentally included bystanders was not an infringement of their privacy under the ordinance. In order to ensure, however, that the privacy of these bystanders was safeguarded, pictures were treated with a program called Facepixelizer before they were analyzed. This program detects faces on the pictures and blurred them accordingly. (See section 4.9 of this chapter for more detailed information on how data was processed, stored and purged.) In addition, participants received clear instructions to turn off the camera when entering private spaces since these spaces were not covered under the ordinance. Furthermore, participants were advised to switch off the wearable camera whenever they were leaving the campus to safeguard their own privacy. However, in case the participants decided to leave the camera on when off campus, data collected was processed using the steps described above to safeguard incidental bystanders' privacy.

#### 4.6.6.4 Focus group interviews

Focus group interviews were used to collect participants' generalizations about their literacy practices, individual participant's experiences, and, corroborate the findings and interpretations made on the basis of earlier observations. A focus group is "a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research" (Powell and Single, 1996: 499). For the current research, four cycles of focus group interviews were held with three groups of participants with meetings once a month from August through November 2016. The three focus groups, A, six members, B, five members, and, C, six members, were

formed by the participants without any intervention from my side. The focus group interviews were held in a room in the building of the Faculty of Education within in a time frame of three days per cycle. All meetings were video recorded, transcribed and coded for existing and emerging themes in MAXQDA. The focus group interviews lasted on average about 1,5 hrs.

The potential of focus group interviews for this study was that the participants in the focus groups could make salient their own experiences and actions related to a certain topic through the interaction with other group members rather than the interaction with the researcher individually. This interaction allowed the researcher to gain insight in the attitudes, values, feelings, experiences and responses of group members (Gibbs, 1997). The participants drew heavily on these strategies during the interviews and often would discuss answers with each other before providing a final answer to me. As I could understand the interaction between the participants in Thai, which was used as a means to scaffold their communication, I overheard their conversations and I was able to gain an even better understanding of the literacy practices they engaged in. This allowed me to identify additional themes and explore these practices in-depth.

Kitzinger (1994) argues that in addition to the information that surfaces from the interviews, the interaction between the group members and their language use also provides the researcher with insight into the cultural values, view on reality and the social practices among group members. During the interviews there were several occasions in which I developed a better understanding of student-teachers' attitudes toward cultural values and views on reality. For example, in several interviews the participants were teasing each other about their intentions when chatting with foreign men on social media. The discussion that ensued provided insight into the complexity of participants' motives to chat with foreign, English speaking men on line. Focus group interviews were not only a rich source of information about participants' digital literacy practices, but also provided an opportunity to analyze

their English language proficiency in a communicative setting. Throughout the entire data collection, this technique was used to corroborate earlier findings and observations with the participants.

At several times during the focus group interviews I asked participants if they could for instance show me an example of their digital English literacy practices. Sometimes, this happened during the interview, whereas at other times I asked the participants to bring examples of their digital English literacy practices. The discussions of these examples during the focus group interviews of for instance Facebook posts, Instagram posts and line messages provided insight in both the literacy practices they engaged in and the affinity spaces that these practices took place. The participants were informed before the focus group interviews started that they may be asked to share examples of their online literacy practices. All participants signed consent forms at the beginning of the interviews and were told that these examples of online practices would be anonymized. They were informed that they were free to decline if they did not want to share this information. Each time they shared an example of their digital literacy practices in the form of Facebook status updates or Instagram posts, they were reminded that it would be part of the data collection and asked if it could be used as part of the analysis. If they did, they were asked to share a screen capture with me on Line.

The positioning and role of the researcher in the focus groups interviews however, determines to a large extent the quality and breadth of the information and knowledge that comes out of the interviews. Kvale (1996) describes two different types of interviewers: the miner who sees interviewing as a method to excavate knowledge and information buried in the participants, and, the traveler who sees interviewing as a journey on which stories and accounts are re-constructed through social interaction with the participants. The traveler analogy, then, allows for the exploration of topics emerging as a result of the interaction with the participants. These two analogies follow different epistemological perspectives of knowledge construction, different methodological approaches and a different positioning of the interviewer. In this study, I followed a traveler's approach to interviewing in

which, in line with the theoretical underpinnings of a nexus analysis, topics and themes emerged as a result of the interaction with the participants.

#### 4.6.6.5 Data analysis in engaging the nexus

The data during this stage of the nexus analysis was collected with the aim to understand better the literacy practices, the role digital technology played in these practices, and, how social spaces were constructed as a result of engaging in these practices. The data were analyzed using three different approaches of analysis. First of all, the field notes from the observations and the transcripts of the focus group interviews were analyzed to identify mediated actions, the digital tools used to take these actions and the discourses in place. All interviews were transcribed and entered into MAXQDA. During the transcriptions I underlined all instances in which I was not fully sure of the meaning of their comments in Thai. As participants often used slang with each other, I corroborated these findings with my patron, Ajarn D, since she is not teaching the participants, and, another native speaker of Thai who is a high school teacher and also familiar with the language use of Thai students. When corroborating translations, I first introduced the context of the instance and then played the recording after which I asked them to explain to me what they thought what was being said. After that we compared my interpretation, in the case I was able to understand some of it, and decided on which one was the most likely interpretation of the situation.

I followed two processes for coding the data from the transcripts and field notes. Before starting the coding I identified the main themes I wanted to code. These were generic codes such as, literacy practices, English language use, literacy events and digital literacies and so forth. These codes could later be refined and subdivided into more specific codes. After I entered the data in MAXQDA, I started coding for the generic themes and identified any other interesting situations. I coded these situations with 'interesting' and then read through the transcripts again to see if I could see any other themes

emerging. On the basis of the emerging themes, I identified sub-themes of the existing codes. The coded transcripts formed the basis of the next stage of nexus analysis, navigating the nexus, in which the semiotic cycles leading up to and away from these practices were mapped and analyzed.

The still images from the wearable camera were analyzed using a multimodal analysis and assisted the identification of the digitally mediated actions. The data was then combined with the data from the social action map and the focus group interviews to map and analyze the sites of engagement and the social spaces these sites of engagement produced. This allowed for a better understanding of the participants' historical bodies, the discourses in place, and, the interaction order between the participants while engaging these practices. The last analysis done at this stage involved identifying digital literacy events from the social actions identified up to this stage. Following Jones and Hafner (2012), I define digital literacy events as those observable events involving actions of "communicating, relating, thinking and being which are associated with digital media" (P.13). Within these events a differentiation was made between literacy events involving language learning, subject specific learning and other literacy events. This analysis was done to create insight into the relationships between the different literacy events and how English literacy events are embedded in the digitally mediated practices that participants engaged in.

At the end of this stage, the data analyzed identified the participants' literacy practices and the role technology played in engaging in these practices. It also provided insight into the social spaces that were constructed as a result of engaging in these practices. The findings of this analysis informed and directed the next stage in the nexus analysis, navigating the nexus of practice.

## 4.7 Navigating the nexus of practice

The second stage of a nexus analysis, navigating the nexus, involves a detailed mapping of semiotic cycles leading to and away from the social action that is studied. This stage typically involves a closer analysis of the nexus. The aim of this stage is, as Scollon and Scollon (2004) put it,

“to get a broader understanding of the ways that times and places prior to the social action we are interested in have brought their influence into the current situation and the ways in which this social action anticipates or presupposes outcomes (P.87)”.

During this stage two tasks are central to the data collection; mapping and circumferencing.

### 4.7.1 Mapping semiotic cycles

During the process of mapping, the semiotic trajectories of the discourses and practices converging at moments of action are mapped. This stage of data collection was informed by the data collected and analyzed during the first stage of the nexus analysis. On the basis of these findings new themes emerged and new questions were formulated to direct further data collection. Mapping the semiotic cycles of the discourses and actions in the nexus of practice was aimed at creating a better understanding of the itineraries of the discourses and practices that lead up to moments of action. The mapping of semiotic cycles focused on three aspects: the historical bodies of the participants, the discourses in place, and, the tools that participants used to mediate their practices.

#### 4.7.1.1 Historical bodies of the participants

A central task in describing the nexus of practice is identifying the historical bodies of the participants by tracing the semiotic cycles that run through the nexus of practice. Scollon (2001) describes the historical body as “the practices in and through which we act without a second thought” (P. 153). The aim of this stage was then to analyze the extent to which the literacy practices have

become part of the nexus of practice and whether these practices are unique to the participants. In addition, the actions and literacies identified in the last stage needed to be considered in a wider network of practices to find out if there were any linkages between the practices observed in this nexus and other nexus of practice. In order to do this, I used the combined data from the classroom observations, the action event surveys, and, the focus group interviews. The themes and questions for the focus group interviews were informed by the data from the observations and the action event surveys. The interviews focused on discussing the most salient social, learning and literacy practices to trace back to what extent the observed practices are sedimented in their historical bodies and how these practices form linkages to other practices.

A good example of this was found in the practice of proof-reading. The semiotic artifacts that were analyzed as part of their course assignments still showed spelling mistakes and other grammatical inconsistencies. This led me to believe that they did not engage in proof-reading their assignments in English. However, when their language use was discussed as part of other social practices, such as posting a Facebook status update, I noticed that they thoroughly proof read their English. This showed how the practice of proof-reading can be part of one nexus of practice—for instance that of using English on social media—but not in another—that of using English for their studies.

#### 4.7.1.2 Discourses in place

Mapping the discourses in place consists of identifying and making salient the overt and covert discourses in place in order to analyze which discourses in place have been foregrounded and backgrounded. It is important to make the covert discourses salient as it shows which discourses have become internalized as practice and which ones have yet to become internalized. The data from the observations, the event action survey, and, the focus group interviews were used to make salient the covert discourses. These discourses were recorded and used as coded themes in the data analysis of the transcripts of the focus group interviews and the observations. This enabled me to identify how

discourses internalized as practice played a role in the literacy events and the learning practices of the participants. In some cases, conflicting discourses were found in which overt discourses, such as those restricting the use of technology in the classroom by the lecturers, opposed the covert discourse internalized as practice allowing student-teachers to use their smart phones in class without any repercussions.

Special emphasis was placed on mapping those discourses in the form of textbooks, online learning sources or digital tools that student-teachers used in their literacy practices. During my observations and analysis of the visual data I took notes on the discourses in place and how this was represented in the learning materials presented to the student-teachers such as slides, textbooks and handouts. I then traced these discourses to see how these discourses were re-entextualized as tools to mediate future action. This allowed me to trace these discourses along their semiotic trajectories and the time scales on which these processes cycled. I took notes of all these observations and used these notes to inform the questions of the following focus group interview. At the same time, this also allowed me to trace covert discourses internalized in practices. By observing the participants language performance and their teaching performance I was able to trace back the covert discourses that mediated specific actions outside the classroom. This overlapped, to a large extent, with the next step of analyzing the mediational means used in participants' practices.

#### 4.7.1.3 Mediational means

Mapping the mediational means focused on finding out what mediational means were used, both psychological and material, and, how unique these mediational means were for this particular action. It also enabled me, as pointed out in the previous section, to analyze how stable the mediational means were, and, how the use of these mediational means by the participants had shaped and changed over time. For the current research, the emphasis was on those tools and technologies which came in

the form of digital technology mediating a particular social action, and, how these digital tools relate to other technologies of mediation. In this context, I follow Jones (2016) who applies a broader perspective on technologies of mediation including, for instance, cultural tools and speech. He argues that technologies of mediation should be seen as a set of configurations of affordances and constraints. These technologies should then be observed within the context of the potential the user has to put the affordances to action (Gee, 2014).

The data informing this particular task was collected alongside the data collected through observations, focus group interviews and the still images from the action event survey. For the observations, one column was dedicated to recording the mediational means. These mediational means were recorded alongside the action observed and the discourses in place. These observation sheets were then coded for themes during data analysis. Similar to the discourses in place and the practices sedimented in the historical bodies, I tried to trace the trajectories of use of the mediational means to see how they developed over time and how they were used routinely in the nexus of practice.

For example, early on in the study I noticed the use of a class representative as a person who would translate the instructions from the foreign lecturer. I noticed from my notes that the student-teachers routinely turned to one particular person in the classroom to translate the instructions. In other words, the student-teachers with lower English proficiency levels mediated their understanding of the instructions given in English through one proficient student-teacher. During the focus group interviews I asked the person who translated most of the time if she could talk me through this practice. She explained in detail what she did and the motives. We found out that, in fact, she had been the means to mediate the practice of giving instructions in English for a large part of the four years they had been at NSRU. In other words, she embodied a technology of mediation and this had become a firmly established part of the nexus of practice in giving instructions in English in the classroom. This was not limited to the classroom but also outside the classroom and on social media which linked her mediation

to a number of other social practices. This practice in itself had a strong influence on the other student-teachers and changed their practices up to the point that they would not even try to understand the instructions but simply wait for her to translate it for them. This practice was also a theme that emerged as part of the discussion on the participants' language proficiency during the research interviews conducted with the foreign lecturers.

#### 4.7.3 Circumferencing

Once these semiotic cycles have been mapped out it is important to investigate the trajectories of each of these cycles by widening the circumference of analysis. The process of circumferencing aims at identifying what actions are taken in anticipation of future actions or as emanations from previous actions, what time scales these actions are functioning on, and, if these actions are situated in a network of semiotic cycles in which they intersect or are part of other semiotic cycles. Circumferencing the semiotic cycles allows for the identification of the key elements that give meaning to an action and whether any transformation or changes have taken place over time. For this study, the emphasis was on how the digital literacy practices were shaped by and the result of past actions and practices, how these practices anticipated future action, and, how these literacy practices were embedded in larger semiotic cycles and Discourses on language learning and teaching, literacy and technology in Thai society. Emphasis was placed on how the current digital literacy practices of the participants related to their future careers as teachers in the same education system.

In order to collect additional data, I conducted semi-structured interviews or research interviews with lecturers and other stakeholders in Thai education. Kvale (1996) describes a research interview as a conversation between two people on a commonly shared theme or topic. However, unlike in surveys, the development of the topics and themes are open and the breadth of the answers given is fairly wide which can lead to new insights based on the researcher's interviewing techniques

and the willingness of the interviewee to share information. For the process of circumferencing semi-structured interviews were carried out with five lecturers within the faculty of education including the lecturers of whom I have observed classes, two foreign lecturers from the language center, my patron, Ajarn D, and, the vice president of academic affairs of the university in the capacity of gatekeeper. All these interviews were carried out between July and November 2015 and took on average 1,5 hours per interview. As part of mapping the larger Discourses in society and tracing discourse cycles beyond the actors at NSRU, I carried out semi-structured interviews with two officials at the Ministry of Education; both were Senior Expert in Analysis and Research of Basic Education Provision.<sup>5</sup> This contact and interview was negotiated through my existing professional network in Thailand. Other attempts to contact stakeholders were left unanswered.

#### 4.7.4 Data analysis in navigating the nexus

At this point of engaging the nexus, the most important digitally mediated learning practices, language learning events, and digital literacy events have been identified. The aim of the analysis was then to consider them within a wider context of semiotic cycles by taking into consideration the historical bodies of the participants, the interaction order of the participants, the discourses in place and the tools used to mediate these practices. The analysis focused on two aspects.

First of all, the data was analyzed within a framework of discourse practices to find out if the observed practices evidenced emerging or existing discourse practices and whether these learning and teaching related discourse practices form a nexus of practice. I analyzed how discourse practices produced social spaces and how particular practices were confined to certain social spaces or formed linkages with other spaces creating a network of social spaces over which practices are distributed. For the data analysis, I placed special emphasis on how participants' levels of engagement in particular

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<sup>5</sup> Names are withheld intentionally

discourse practices or in developing discourse practices changed over time. For example, I observed an emerging discourse practice when student-teachers went out to do a one-week teaching practicum at a local school. Previously during peer-teaching practice, participants' heavily relied on their peer's existing knowledge of the teaching activities which developed a stable but limited range of the use of classroom English. During their teaching practicum, they found out that this limited range of classroom English was not sufficient. This changed the existing discourse practice of classroom English, creating a network of linked, but slightly different, nexus of practice (NoP). This linked the NoP from their own classes where they are student-teachers, the NoP of their peer-teaching practice, and, the NoP of their teaching practicum where they are lecturers.

The second focus for analysis attempted to find out how the observed digitally mediated social, learning, and, literacy practices and the network of social spaces they produced related to the wider Discourse on learning, teaching and literacy in Thai society. Critical discourse analysis was used to analyze if there were any social power relations between the larger Discourse within the institution and beyond which promote or inhibit certain practices to take place.

#### 4.8 Changing the nexus

The last stage, changing the nexus, ultimately aimed at addressing the observed issues through re-engagement with the nexus. In practice this meant that I formulated the findings from the previous stages and re-engaged with the participants to see if the participants could positively influence the nexus of practice by taking these questions into consideration. Questions, as Scollon and Scollon (2004) put it; have more discursive power than indicative statements as questions require action. Change within this stage of the nexus analysis should be carefully defined though as its meaning depends on the actors, the action it mediates and the site of engagement in which it is used. Scollon and Scollon (2004) are careful to state that change in a nexus analysis does not mean that the researcher has a mandate to

enact change in the nexus that is studied. Change, in a nexus analysis, is seen as an integral part of the engagement of the researcher in which the nexus of the historical bodies, interaction order and discourses in place are made visible. The way people talk about things is informed by their social practices and mediated by the actions they take. These social practices are informed by their historical bodies and are affected and changed by changes in any of the elements within the semiotic ecosystem (Scollon, 2001). By taking an engaged stance to discourse analysis in which the researcher engages in the nexus through social interaction with the participants, the researcher inevitably changes the nexus of practice (Scollon and Scollon, 2004).

An engaged form of discourse analysis which includes engagement with the nexus can be seen as social action in its own right. This study took this observation into account and acknowledged that the nexus would be changed, in varying degrees, as a result of the interaction between the participants and me, my presence during observations, and, by the tools I was going to use to record or reconstruct practices. Change from this perspective should then be seen as an integral, though inevitable part of a nexus analysis. However, this should be seen in the form of empowerment which enables participants to change their current practices in a way in which effective digitally mediated practices can be applied and used in those social spaces in which they are currently not yet used but potentially would be effective and a contribution to the local learning ecology as a whole. During this stage of the nexus analysis I attempted to empower the participants with questions which potentially helped them in bringing about change in their current practices. I invited all lecturer participants for a discussion of the findings in September, 2016. I met with the foreign and the Thai lecturers on separate occasions. The meeting with the Thai lecturers was shared repeatedly on a Line group, a type of chat application, in which all lecturers from both the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities are part. Two Thai lecturers attended the meeting and my patron, Ajarn D. The two Thai lecturers left early as

they had to attend another meeting. All foreign lecturers attended the discussion session I organized with them, including the lecturers who were not part of the data collection.

#### 4.9 Data processing, tracking and storing

Participants in this study signed consent forms for all the data collected as part of this study which involved direct or indirect participation of the participants such as observations, focus group interviews, visual images, and, other tasks involving data that could possibly identify participants. Five different types of data were collected, stored and analyzed: general documentation on learning and technology in Thailand, field notes from observations, video recordings and transcripts of focus group interviews and research interviews, social action maps and the still images captured with the wearable camera. MAXQDA was used as the primary tool for qualitative data analysis and as a means to store both textual and multimodal data. MAXQDA allowed storage and tracking of the data collected at multiple times during the semester. After each data recording the data was added to MAXQDA.

##### 4.9.1 General documentation

General documentation on learning and technology in Thailand was entered into MAXQDA as a text document and coded for the relevant discourses and events these documents contained. These scripts were coded with the same themes as the other transcripts to compare this data with other sources of data.

##### 4.9.2 Field notes

The field notes taken during the classroom observations and other events were written out within 12 hours after observation. The field notes were entered into MAXQDA and tagged with the date of observation. The data were coded with a number of predefined themes. Additional themes for learning and literacy events were added throughout the data collection process after corroborating the findings of the field notes in the focus group interviews with the participants.

#### 4.9.3 Visual data from interviews

The visual data of the participatory videos, the focus group interviews and the research interviews were entered into MAXQDA and the speech of the participants was transcribed. The interviews were coded with the same codes used for the observation data. In addition, the focus group interview data was coded for observations made during the interview regarding language learning events and digital literacy events.

#### 4.9.4 Maps and images

The data from the social action map activity and the geo-tagged still images were processed in a three step method. First, the participants who had been wearing the camera were given access to the data and could remove any images they do not want to have included in the data. The second step involved the pixilation of the faces of the bystanders in the pictures. The pictures were processed by Facepixelizer which detected faces on the pictures and blurred them accordingly. Third, the images were analyzed for moments of repeated actions and 'frozen actions'. One representative image per moment was selected and added together with the pictures of the 'frozen actions' to MAXQDA and coded with the themes for further analysis.

#### 4.9.5 Storage

All data was stored and backed up on a secured 100 GB Google Drive account. The drive involved a two-step verification procedure. Participants have signed consent form for the use of the data for the current thesis but also for future publication that derive from this thesis. The data will thus be kept for a period of two years after this thesis has been submitted.

#### 4.10 Summary

This section described the plan of action for data collection, the instruments and methods employed to collect the data, and, the research site and participants. Foremost, the effect of taking an engaged stance to discourse analysis has been described and the potential influence I personally bring to this process has been justified. Anticipations have been made to account for the way in which this engaged approach to discourse analysis has affected the data in way which explains rather than eradicates this influence.

## **Chapter 5: Digital Technology and English Literacy practices: A day in the lives of Thai Student-teachers**

### 5.1 Introduction

The goal of this chapter is to introduce the literacy practices that the student-teachers in the current study engage in, and the tools they use in these practices with the purpose of theorizing a framework of space, learning geographies, sites of engagement, and time scales. The chapter discusses how different technologies create affordance and constraints for student-teachers in their literacy practices, and how these affordances and constraints influence where and when they engage in these practices. A vignette is used at the start of this chapter to illustrate the various practices the student-teachers engage in throughout the day and the tools, such as digital technologies, they use to mediate these practices. The discussion in the remainder of the chapter draws on this vignette to analyze these practices and tools. The observations in this chapter will form the foundation for a more detailed discussion of these practices, tools, and their spatial and temporal features in the classroom (chapter 5), outside the classroom (chapter 6) and how these practices relate to the larger discourses on digital technology and learning in Thai society (chapter 7).

### 5.2 Vignette

This vignette describes literacy practices of a group of student-teachers and the tools they use to engage in these practices on a Wednesday in the fall semester 2015 at their university in the center of Thailand. The class that was observed in the vignette included six out of the seventeen student-teachers participating in the study. The group work activities following the class involved four of the participants. The vignette was written on the basis of data from classroom observations, visual tracking through wearable cameras, analysis of semiotic artifacts such as videos, handouts and PowerPoint slides, and, focus group interviews with the student-teachers to corroborate the observations.

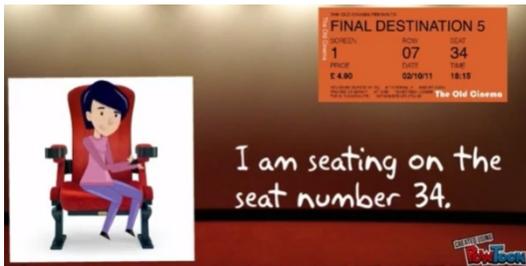
Vignette 1: The literacy events of a group of student-teachers throughout a sample day

It's 8.15 AM and student-teachers are slowly trickling in for their course on Technology and Media in English Language Teaching. The student-teachers who are already in the classroom are making last minute corrections to a portfolio they need to hand in for this course. Some are copying the last answers from each other while others make sure their folders look presentable. Tik and Cherry scroll through Instagram and Facebook messenger on their smart phones. Others enjoy the last bits of their breakfast while keeping one finger clean to navigate the screen of their smart phones. The lecturer enters the classroom and immediately tells the student-teachers to turn on the lights and fans,



and, to get the projector ready to watch the videos that the student-teachers have produced as a group assignment this semester. She hands out the peer evaluation sheets for the videos and sits down. In the ten minutes before the official start of the class, the lecturer sets up her laptop and navigates to the course Facebook group on which the groups have posted the links to the PowToon videos they have uploaded on YouTube. She is trying to make a couple of comments in Thai but most of the student-teachers are focused on the screens of their smart phones and are not paying attention to what she says.

After a while the lecturer is visibly annoyed and takes the microphone as she feels she isn't being heard clearly enough. She opens the Facebook group again, scrolls to the first post with a video link. She gives meticulous instructions in Thai on how to use the evaluation sheet and starts the videos. The basic format for each animation video is the same and they have been created using the same program, PowToon. There is one video presenting vocabulary, one video showing the vocabulary used in a sentence and one video on showing the use of vocabulary



in a conversation. The videos are about one minute long.

Most videos contain basic spelling and grammar mistakes, and, odd use of vocabulary. The videos are played quickly

after one another and student-teachers quickly lean over to

each other to discuss a grade before going watching the next clip. An, Noi, Cherry, and Tik look bored and alternate checking Facebook, Line, and Instagram with watching the videos. Tik has her head on her friends shoulder, An is slouching on her chair and Cherry leans on her friends shoulder while occasionally checking her Instagram account. Throughout the process of watching the videos, the lecturer says very little and does not provide any feedback on the videos. Each group receives a round of applause after the three videos have been shown. It takes about 40 minutes to show all the videos. Most student-teachers have given 4 or 5 out of 5 scores for each component. The evaluation sheets are handed in and the lecturer collects their workbooks. The collection is facilitated by a student-teacher who announces the names of the other student-teachers through the microphone and puts them in the order of the class list. The lecturer sits behind her desk and checks off the name of each student-teacher who has handed in their workbook.

After all the portfolios have been handed in, the lecturer takes the microphone back from the student-teacher and asks if there are any questions. No one asks a question and the student-teachers are surprised when the lecturer announces that this was the end of the course. The student-teachers

react surprised but delighted as there are still three weeks left of official teaching. The student-teachers start packing and Bom leads in the final closing ritual with a rising tone: “students.” and the class responds in English with a choral: “thank you teacher”.

After the class has finished Tick, Cherry, Noi and Bom pack up their belongings and move to the air-conditioned lobby of the building where they sit down on sofas and comfortable chairs. They all have their smart phones in hand and are talking about

setting up a plan for two assignments they need to complete: a the peer teaching practice activity using a combination of Chinese whispers and a spelling game and an assignment in which they have to develop self-access English language learning materials with an ASEAN member state as the central theme. Noi takes out a notepad

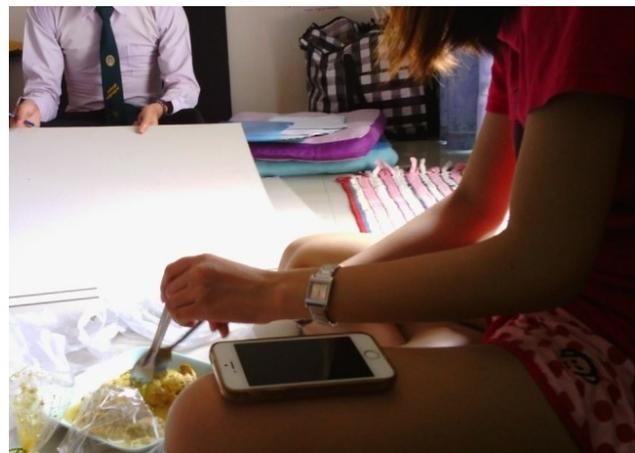


and takes notes and makes a schematic model of how they are going to present the information for the self-access learning materials. They agree that it should be a three-dimensional model. Noi, An and a friend are looking for ideas on the internet on their smart phones. Rice cookies are shared between the group members and smart phones passed around to show pictures of possible models they found on websites. Cherry has taken out her paper notepad as well and she is also drawing a model. Noi puts her phone down while Tick and her friend keep on browsing for ideas. They pass the sketch pad around, make changes and discuss how to plan for their reading activity. During this planning and discussion they draw several models on how to present the reading text/information in their activity. Noi is chatting to a friend on messenger and not everyone is always as engaged in the process as others. They all take turns in writing on the sketchpad, looking up ideas on their smart phones and adding parts of the model or revising it. Finally, Noi remembers a 3 dimensional folding pop-up book she has seen once before and

proposes it as a possible solution. However, she is not sure how to make it. They decide to go with the 3d popup book and An vaguely remembers how to make it. She will look up the specific details later. They decide to break for lunch and pack up their belongings after a little over 30 minutes of planning. They walk to the parking lot and meet student-teachers from their parallel class in front of the faculty building where they are sitting outside, also planning for their teaching activity for the next day. Their group work practices show a similar picture with student-teachers working on laptops, taking notes on sketchpads and chatting on their smart phones.

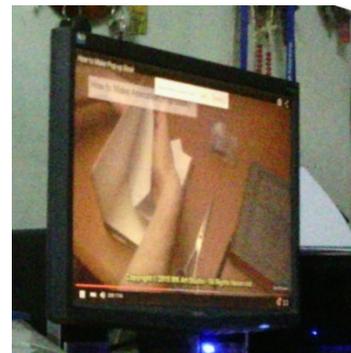
Cherry, Tick, and An ride a motorbike to An and Tick's dorm room off campus, and, buy lunch and materials on the way for the activity for the next day. Cherry, Tick and An have quickly gone home to change their student-teacher uniforms for

something more casual. Noi and some of the other group members who live further away still wear their uniform. The dorm room is shared between An and Tick. There is a fridge, a large bed, a wardrobe and some small bookcases. The floor and the bed function primarily as workspaces for this afternoon. On the



wall are several pictures of the two of them and a large poster with the Japanese alphabet. They all sit down on the floor cross-legged in a circle, foam boxes with food and a plastic spoon in front of them and their smart phones resting on their knees or on the floor in front of them. They eat lunch, flick through their phones and discuss how they are going to make the actual materials for their activities.

After lunch, they spread out materials and boxes on the floor in between them to make the materials for two activities: a 3d pop-up book and a Chinese whispers and spelling game. While the rest of the



group is working on one assignment, Noi, An and a friend ride a motorbike to the house of one of their friends where they have two desktop computers and a printer. They sit down in front of the computer and An starts looking up YouTube tutorials on how to make 3d pop-up books. She watches several videos on YouTube and tries out some of the techniques.

Noi is looking up pictures on Google Images of



Indonesian artifacts that they want to use as visual support for the reading activity and their popup books. She also runs a couple of Google searches in Thai for descriptions with the pictures. They print out a number of color pictures and descriptions for both the Chinese

whispers game and the self-access learning materials. While they are waiting for the printing to be

finished, An is trying out several models which she folds as

instructed in the video and Noi chats with a couple of people on

Line on her phone and browses through her Facebook feed on the

desktop computer. She clicks on a couple of links, looks at several

pictures, and makes a quick comment on a post. They then go



back to the dorm room where the other group members are cutting the materials in shape.

Everyone has their own task to complete. Tick is writing out the instructions they are going to

give in class tomorrow for the peer

teaching practice. Others are cutting

the pictures in shape to fit the

cardboard frames after which An

folds them into the right shape. One



of the student-teachers is reading information on a laptop on a website for writing advice. He is also

reading an annotated article on “Let’s Learning English” (sic), a website that uses current US news clips and annotated transcripts as a way of learning English. Two other student-teachers are cutting up the letters of the names of animals they are going to use for the Chinese whispers – spelling game. They found descriptions of the four animals, snail, tiger, squirrel, and, giraffe, earlier on the website of MacMillan Thesaurus and Noi and An printed them out after lunch. Noi is occasionally checking her Line and Facebook accounts.

An has her phone resting on her knee throughout the afternoon when she is working on the cut outs. Occasionally she picks it up to answer a question of a customer of her online webstore where she sells clothes. She copy-pastes pictures from the gallery of her phone to Line to show examples of the different clothes she sells. While working on the cut-outs, they joke around with each other and share food. Cherry lies down on the bed next to Tick for a while to relax, probably tired from sitting on the floor, while the others continue to cut out more models. Another group member cuts the book covers to the right size.

After all the cut-out models are ready, the texts are added and they continue working on the teaching assignment for the next day. An is cutting paper strips with a friend to fill the grab box while Cherry and Noi and another student-teacher are cutting out letters to form the names of animals. They have already cut out the plastic squares to which the letters for the Chinese whispers / spelling game can be glued and the trays to put the letters on. Noi alternates the cutting of the letters with chatting on Line and



Facebook with a friend. Noi and SI are also working on writing out the instructional language they are going to use in the classroom. Noi has a sheet of paper next to her with the script for the activity in which she explains and introduces the activity. After finishing the cut-outs and the paper snippets, An

lies down on the bed next to Tick and starts chatting on her phone. Tick is still working on her computer.

### 5.3 Sites of Engagement and Intersecting Practices

The vignette above describes a number of moments of action, or sites of engagement, on a Wednesday during a fall semester. Throughout the day the student-teachers engage in a number of literacy practices and these various practices converge at real-time moments at these sites of engagement that enable the student-teachers to take these actions. For example, a site of engagement is opened in the morning when the student-teachers watch and evaluate the PowToon videos they made as part of the course requirements. A number of practices converge at this site of engagement such watching the video, filling in evaluation forms, talking to friends in the classroom, checking updates on Instagram, and chatting on Line. At certain points during the activity some practices are foregrounded such as filling in the evaluation form, whereas at other moment chatting with friends or checking updates on Instagram are foregrounded. Although some practices are foregrounded and others are backgrounded, all these practices, the discourses that mediate them such as the evaluation form, the videos, ideas and beliefs about peer evaluation, and the tools that are used to engage in these practices, are co-existing at the same time. Another example of a site of engagement can be observed when they go to the house of a friend and look up YouTube videos on how to create a 3d model, pictures of sites in Indonesia and information for their self-access reading materials. These examples are typically moments that last for a particular length of time in which a number of practices intersect that allow an action to take place. The practices that are observed at these sites of engagement are not unique to this particular site of engagement since some of these practices, such as watching a YouTube video, browsing a Facebook group and critical thinking, also converge at other moments and spaces and enable student-teachers to take other actions. The literacy practices that converge at these sites of engagement take place at the intersection of the historical bodies of the actors, the social relationships

between the actors, and, the discourses in place (Scollon and Scollon, 2004). The practices and tools that both the lecturer and student-teachers bring to this site of engagement are not uniform practices; instead, they are individualized and shaped over time as a result of engaging in these practices. Both student-teachers and lecturers bring these historical bodies of engaging in these practices to the classroom. For instance, the way the lecturer navigates the Facebook group, the meticulous instructions she provides, the use of a microphone, or, her choice to use Thai rather than English, are all part of her historical body and the way that she has learned over time to engage in these practices. At the same time, the way that the student-teachers evaluate each other, use the evaluation form, watch the videos on YouTube, or give a round of applause after each video is part of their historical bodies, and, how they have learned over time to engage in these social practices and what is normative for them as a practice.

These practices intersect with the discourses in place, such as classroom discourse or pedagogical discourse, but also the discourses that are present in the form of texts that are of importance for that particular social action at that moment. The discourses in place are not only those discourses that are visibly present at a particular moment of action but also include the individual beliefs and principles held by for instance the student-teachers and the lecturer on how effective learning and teaching should take place in the classroom. These discourses manifest itself in the ways they mediate the actions taking place in the classroom. Other discourses in place at this site of engagement are more visible such as the instructions the lecturer gave, the evaluation forms, or the comments and posts on the class Facebook group. These discourses also mediate actions but in their dialectic with the action taken create a distinct situated meaning. For instance, the action of giving instructions will be distinctly different and mediated by different discourses if the lecturer for instance gives instructions to one of her colleagues on how to fill out an evaluation form or if she gives instructions to the student-teachers in the classroom on how to fill in an evaluation form. Similarly, An will engage in the practice of evaluating her classmates' YouTube videos from a different perspective, mediated by different discourses, than

when she engages in the practice of evaluating YouTube clips to help her find techniques to fold the 3d-popup book in the afternoon. This is illustrated by the fact that despite the abundance of grammar errors in her classmates' YouTube videos, she consistently gave high marks to each group. This shows that different discourses mediate the practice of evaluating videos in the classroom than at other moments of action.

The discourses in place and the practices the student-teachers and lecturers engage in are also influenced by the way they relate to each other socially. The practices that intersect at these sites of engagement in the classroom are highly codified practices due to the hierarchical social relationship between the lecturer and the student-teachers. Here, the interaction order between the lecturer and the student-teachers determines how they both engage in the practices that converge at this site of engagement. This results in, for instance, student-teachers listening to and following the instructions given by the lecturer, but it also means that the practice of sitting in the classroom entails that student-teachers sit in rows next to each other facing the front of the class and the lecturer sits behind a desk facing the class.

#### 5.4 Social Spaces

The activities and the practices that are described in the vignette above all take place in various physical spaces. The meaning of these physical spaces are constructed through the practices, discourses, tools and semiotic artifacts that actors bring to this physical space to engage in these practices (Lefebvre, 1991; Soja 1996; Scollon and Scollon, 2003; Massey, 2005). However, as I argued in chapter 2, the construction of social space should be seen as a dialectic interaction. For example, the meaning of the physical space of a classroom is constructed as a social space by the practices that are taking place such as giving instruction, asking and answering questions, lecturing and so forth. In addition, the tools and semiotic artifacts used to take these actions, such as a whiteboard, the chairs and tables, the

handouts and other learning materials, and, wall posters also co-construct the classroom as a social space. However, the meaning of these practices, tools and semiotic artifacts, are also constructed by their emplacement in the material world in general and in this physical space in particular. A whiteboard in the classroom for instance is an instructional tool whereas in an office or in a board room, this tool might have a different meaning. Another good example is the video evaluation activity that takes place in the morning. The practices of evaluating, watching a video on YouTube, sitting in small groups with other student-teachers, a teacher deciding the order of the videos to be watched and so forth, all construct the classroom as a social space. The fact that the lecturer determines the pace, that the student-teachers are required to evaluate the videos, and that the videos are made by other student-teachers, make this a typical modern classroom activity taking place in the classroom as a social space. However, similar practices such as watching YouTube videos with classmates in small groups and discussing the quality of the video could easily be observed elsewhere for instance in a dorm room or in a coffee shop. However, they would converge with other practices and construct a different social space as a result of actors engaging in these practices. Most importantly, by engaging in these practices as sites of engagement, student-teachers and lecturers construct identities. By participating in these practices in the classroom, following the instructions by the lecturer, the student-teachers construct their identities as student-teachers. Similarly, by giving instructions, determining the pace of the videos to be watched and taking control of the Facebook group, the lecturer constructs her identity as a lecturer by engaging in these practices. However, student-teachers construct different identities when they engage in similar practices at slightly different intersections of practices in different social spaces. For instance, watching YouTube videos with other student-teachers in a coffee shop constructs different identities, for instance those of friends, and a different social space. The social space as a theoretical concept then is, as Scollon (1999, 2002) argues, part of the site of engagement where all these practices, tools and artifacts converge, and like the site of engagement it is a temporary state. For the period of

time that this site of engagement is open, this social space is historically associated with, and constructed by, the practices the lecturer and student-teachers engage in, the discourses in place, and the social relationships between teachers and student-teachers (Scollon, 2002; Blommaert and Huang, 2009). Blommaert and Huang (2009) call this a 'historical space' as the practices, discourses in place and social relationships are known to the actors and are part of their historical bodies. These practices are normative for this particular space, for instance a room in a building at the university, and create a connection between the physical space and the social space constructed as part of the intersecting practices at the site of engagement. For example, when the lecturer gives instructions on the evaluation form, her practice is mediated by a specific pedagogical discourse that embodies a set of principles and beliefs about interaction in the classroom that she subscribes to, but also what language to use, and the language and even the existence of the form itself. The way she engages in this practice of giving instructions in the classroom is part of her historical body, and the product of her historical experience of giving instructions as a teacher, learning about instructions as a student-teacher, and, receiving instructions as a student in the Thai education system. Finally, the way she relates to the student-teachers is determined by the social hierarchy and power relations between student-teachers and teachers in Thai education. As a result of this intersection, the practice of giving instruction in this site of engagement is then also recognized by the student-teachers as such. They follow these instructions evidenced by the fact that they are engaging in a series of actions that could be described as evaluating a video assignment. Both the lecturer and the student-teachers see this as a space in which particular normative practices intersect and other transgressive practices do not intersect.

However, the vignette shows that the student-teachers are engaging in other practices at the same time as well, such as chatting with friends on Line messenger, flicking through a Facebook newsfeed, or looking at pictures on Instagram. By engaging in these practices, another layer of social interaction is added to the existing site of engagement. For instance, when the student-teachers are

watching the Youtube videos, they frequently pull out their smart phones and go to Facebook to see if there are any updates, or they open Line messenger to reply to a text that someone has sent them. As a result, these simultaneously opened sites of engagement create laminated social spaces (Goffman, 1981) in which multiple layers of human interaction simultaneously take place. At each of these sites of engagement, different literacy practices converge that enable the participants to take these actions with different actors in different social spaces. In addition, these actions taking place at these sites of engagements vary in duration and cycle on different time scales where one may outlast another. For instance, the Line conversation that student-teachers engage in might be part of a chat that started prior to the class and it could easily outlast the current activity of evaluating the videos.

This layered simultaneity of social interaction also has implications for the way student-teachers manage their actions in social spaces constructed on digital practices such as Facebook and Instagram. Student-teachers and lecturers both have a presence on Facebook and at times their practices intersect, such as at sites of engagement on Facebook groups for their courses. The vignette suggests that student-teachers strategically manage their literacy practices in these different digital social spaces and that they are aware of the possibility that some of these digital literacy practices which are not normative for classroom behavior can intersect with their lecturers' digital literacy practices. The following excerpt shows an example of some of the strategies that student-teachers engage in to keep these practices separated.

Excerpt 1. Extract taken from a focus group interview

- 74 Int           ok so you don't always want to connect to them
- 75 Jenny       we'll probably be in trouble afterward when we post something
- 76 Int           ok why would that be
- 77 Jenny:       well when we post something [crazy] it does not look nice for teacher to know about us
- 78 Som                 [crazy]
- 79 Int           but isn't it separated what you do in the classroom and what you do outside
- 80 Som         different

81 All (laugh loudly)  
82 Int different  
83 Som I mean in the classroom we act like we behave (1.0) yah  
84 Jenny but outside not  
85 All (burst out in laughter)  
86 Noon get in there to be ready for exam

The excerpt shows that student-teachers associate the construction of various social spaces, such as Facebook, with different literacy practices which are normative or acceptable for that particular social space. 'Posting something crazy' takes place as a site of engagement which student-teachers would see as normative or acceptable on Facebook, but not as a site of engagement in which they would like their lecturer to be an actor (line 77). As a result, they strategically zone off their presence on Facebook in private spaces by not friending their teacher. They also indicate (line 83) that the way they act in the classroom, "we act like we behave", is normative for the literacy practices in the classroom and distinctly different from how they engage in these practices outside the classroom. The course Facebook group that is managed by their lecturer seems to be an extension of the classroom rather than an extension of their private spaces on Facebook. This is also evidenced in the different ways these spaces are constructed. The Facebook practices they engage in when posting "something crazy" are mediated by different discourses in place and governed by different social relationships between the actors than the Facebook practice they engage in when they post their assignments on the class Facebook group. In order to keep these social spaces and their normative behavior separated, student-teachers refrain from friending their teachers on Facebook since this would mean that the teachers would effectively become actors in the sites of engagement that are opened through posting a status update or commenting on Facebook.

What these sites of engagement and these laminated layers of social interaction illustrate is that the classroom is not a bounded space in which teaching and learning activities take place in isolation.

Instead, it is a fluid, permeable social space in which a number of different literacy practices co-exist alongside each other. These practices however, are foregrounded and backgrounded depending on the focal attention of the student-teachers and the lecturer. The vignette illustrates how multiple social spaces are created as the result of student-teachers engaging in practices converging at multiple sites of engagement.

### 5.5 Discourse itineraries and resemiotization

The practices described above create a network of connections between different sites of engagement and social spaces and discourses. These practices and discourses develop and are shaped by cycling through these multiple sites of engagement in what Scollon (2001, 2008) calls discourse itineraries. He argues that these discourse itineraries connect moments of action and social spaces within socio-ecosystems. As discourses and practices converge at moments of action they are changed by the discourses and practices co-present at these intersections. In some cases, the dialectic between discourse and action produces semiotic artifacts such as a filled in evaluation form, a discussion on Line messenger or a comment or post on Facebook. These semiotic artifacts are not static and confined to one moment, but also cycle through moments of action and connect moments of action across social spaces and across different time scales. Similar to the discourses and practices, these artifacts also change over time as they interact with different practices, actions and discourses while they cycle through sites of engagement. A good example of this is the video that the student-teachers are evaluating in the morning in class. The PowToon video assignment in this course is not a semiotic artifact that stands on its own, but has evolved from, as far as this study has been able to trace it, an explanation by students to a lecturer on how to use PowToon into a course assignment for assessment, after a chain of mediated actions. The process of materializing and rematerializing discourse while they cycle through moments of actions is what Iedema (2003, a,b) refers to as resemiotization. A good

example of resemiotization is found in the PowToon video and the ways in which discourse was materialized and rematerialized from a verbal explanation by the teacher to a clickable video on YouTube. This assignment started with a verbal explanation on how to use PowToon by a group of computer science students to one lecturer in the English department two years before this study was done. At that time, the lecturer developed the idea to integrate PowToon in a course assignment. She discussed it with her colleagues and their ideas, understanding and conversations were rematerialized into course materials such as an instructional video and a handout. Two semesters later, the student-teachers in the current study were given the PowToon course assignment as part of their assessment. The student-teachers produced the videos during various meetings in which they re-entextualized existing language samples they were familiar with as the scripts for the current videos. These videos were not an end point either, as they were resemiotized into a percentage of their course final grade, and created a potential to be used as instructional materials at one point during their future teaching careers.

The current vignette has illustrated how sites of engagement are not fixed beginning or end points of actions, but rather form moments which past actions lead up to and in which future actions are anticipated. The sites of engagement in the vignette above illustrate how the practices of student-teachers and lecturers converge and construct multiple layers of social spaces and simultaneous interaction in the classroom. This creates the impression of the classroom as a permeable fluid social space through which multiple practices cycle and co-exist. As these actions and discourses cycle through these moments they connect moments of action in time and create a nexus of relations between the different social spaces. In the following section, I will describe how technologies of mediation in general and digital technology in particular play an important role for both the lecturer and the student-teachers in taking these mediated actions.

## 5.6 Tools and technologies of mediation

### 5.6.1 Affordances and constraints of tools

In the current vignette, we can observe a number of tools (Wertsch, 1997; Scollon, 2002) that allow the lecturer and the student-teachers to take action. These tools create affordances to take certain actions, but at times also constrain the actions they take. The microphone, for instance, allows the lecturer to amplify her soft voice and reach a wider audience in a class of fifty student-teachers without having to raise her voice, but the wire attached to it limits her freedom to freely move around the class. The overhead projector allows everyone to watch the videos, and the tools like scissors and knives allow them to neatly cut the printed out pictures in the right shapes. In addition to these rather basic tools, a number of other tools are used which create more complex affordances and constraints.

For instance, the Facebook group allows for a different way of communication between the lecturer and the student-teachers, and it provides a medium to which student-teachers can share links to the digital content they produced. In the current study, it also allowed the lecturer and the student-teachers to communicate with each other relatively free of spatial and temporal constraints. The student-teachers were able to ask questions at any time and the lecturer could make announcements at any point during the day from any place as long as she had access to the internet. In addition, the student-teachers were not restricted to handing in their homework assignment at one particular time and space. This suggests that the Facebook group as a tool created affordances for the lecturer and student-teachers to create a parallel social space, unbounded by direct physical constraints that allowed them to engage in learning and teaching practices which are usually associated with the bounded physical classroom. Similarly, the smart phones the student-teachers used in the classroom allowed them to start a chat on Line messenger, or post a Facebook status update which opened sites of engagement with people not directly present in the classroom. In these laminated social spaces, student-teachers engage in different practices and as Gee (2008) argues, by engaging in these situated

practices they can also construct different identities. At one particular moment, someone can be ‘a student-teacher’ and ‘a Facebook friend’ at the same time while being situated in the same physical space.

The student-teachers manage these different identities across these different social spaces through what Jones (2010) calls polyfocal attention structures. Polyfocal attention structures are a social construct in which attention to the practices taking place at these multiple sites of engagement taking place simultaneously is managed through the social structures that are normative for the spaces in which this action take place. Jones argues that in the case of laminated sites of engagement, actors distribute their attention across the sites of engagement by rapidly shifting between the different actions and activities that are taking place at these sites of engagement. The digital literacy practices observed in the vignette above suggest that a similar process is taking place with the student-teachers and their attention structures inside and outside the classroom. The smart phones that An, Noi, Cherry and Tick use allow them to frequently move between different sites of engagement such as the classroom activity, the chats on Line messenger and discussions on Facebook. Another example of this polyfocality is illustrated by an observation made several weeks earlier in the same class.

*“One of the trainees in front of me is receiving a phone call, she briefly and quietly answers it and then hangs up to immediately switch to Messenger and continue the conversation on Messenger. She alternates chatting with underlining sentences and taking notes on the handout of the PowerPoint slides in a rhythm that follows the movements of the focal attention of the teacher. Whenever the lecturer is writing on the board she is messaging; when the lecturer is turned toward the class she is underlining and taking notes.”*

Excerpt 2. Observation made in the classroom, group B

The student-teacher in this observation is engaging in almost a rhythmic pattern of switches in focal attention which is synchronized in a way that does not directly challenge or disrupt the current interaction order. It also does not impede the affordance that technology creates for the student-teacher, since the classroom task at hand is apparently not cognitively demanding enough to interrupt the underlining and note-taking or the chat on Facebook messenger. Throughout the data collection student-teachers were observed to make use of the affordances of digital technology to create laminated social spaces and layers of social interaction. Existing sites of engagement were frequently observed as simultaneously taking place in laminated social interaction with other digital practices. These practices varied and included a range of literacy practices such as chats on Line messenger and Facebook, but also learning related actions such as watching an instructional video on Youtube, finding information online about a particular ASEAN country, and reading about English writing strategies on a website for language learning.

#### 5.6.2 Potential and Effective use of Affordances of tools

The digital tools discussed here have illustrated examples of the affordances that these tools can create. However, the potential of these affordances is highly dependent on the how tools in general and digital tools in particular are used to take actions and to what extent the potential of these tools is used by the person taking the action. Jones (2016) argues that the utility of a tool to mediate an action is not situated in the material tool itself but rather in the moment and the context in which it is put to use. In addition to the utility of the tool, Gee (2014) argues that the affordance of a tool depends on what he calls the 'effective ability' of the user of the tool and the context in which this is used. For instance, the fact that An has her smart phone on her desk in the classroom, or resting on her knee in her room for hours on end, does not directly make that particular space a more fluid space. The 'effective ability' to put it to use though, is formed over a historical trajectory of using a smart phone and this ability has

gradually become part of her historical body. However, the potential of the affordances of this tool to take action only comes into being the moment she draws on her skills to use the smart phone to take action. For instance, she knows how to search for, find, and watch a YouTube video, and she has developed the digital literacies to engage in this practice over time. This is what Gee (2014) refers to as her effective ability. She also has a smart phone with a mobile internet package that allows her to access YouTube, at any time and at any physical place, provided that she has access to the internet. In other words, she has the digital tools to take action. However, the actual potential of these affordances is only put to effective use the moment she searches for, and, finds an instructional video on 3d popup books in the context of planning for an assignment for a course on media in English language learning. In any other context, this affordance will not necessarily be the same. This is important in the evaluation and description of the role of mediational means and their potential in the remainder of the study. Although the student-teachers frequently engage in digital practices throughout the day, creating laminations of social spaces both inside and outside the classroom the potential of these practices and the affordances of these tools to mediate literacy practices are always not self-evident.

### 5.6.3 (Multi)Modality of Tools

The multimodality of their literacy practices and how these practices connect to each other also gives insight into what Lemke (2002, 2005a) calls the traversals of student-teachers' literacy practices across the boundaries of conventional genres of texts. Throughout the day, they engage in literacy events involving printed texts and alternate these with digitally mediated literacy events. This also shows the dynamic nature of their literacy practices and the varying modalities of the tools and texts they use to mediate their literacy events. The student-teachers strategically draw on different sets of tools and technologies and the affordance it creates in that context help them in taking their actions. The sketchpad, for instance, allows for quick representations of models, passing around a phone with a

picture is more efficient than explaining what the model looks like or sharing the link to the picture, and watching a YouTube clip affords the visual representation in motion instead of a textual description of the steps with pictures. This suggests that student-teachers select the technologies to mediate their literacy events on the basis of the affordance of that tool within the given context. The focus group corroborates that student-teachers actively apply a set of criteria to the use of tools in taking certain actions. During the first round of interviews, the student-teachers were asked what sort of digital tools they use and which tools they preferred. In the discussion that followed, student-teachers discussed the nuances of how they apply these tools and that their individual use serves different purposes.

#### Excerpt 3: Extract of focus group interview with student-teachers

- 140 Noi: it's very different to use  
141 Cherry: mmhh  
142 Noi: how we can use to {TH: work} work (1.0) but work in phone cannot (.) use the data  
143 Cherry: {TH: what do you mean}  
144 Noi: {TH:you can't easily enter data or work on documents on your phone}  
145 Tick: cannot type (1.0)  
146 INT: ok so when you have to enter a lot of data or information when you have to type a lot  
it's easier to use a laptop (1.0)  
147 Noi: for example word excel (.) in the phone cannot (.) but Instagram easy to use

Here Noi and Tick explain to Cherry and me as the interviewer (Int), that they use their phones and laptops in different ways and for different purposes. Noi tries to explain (line 142, 144) that for data input or working on data or documents a phone is not a good tool. Tick adds that the reason (line 145) is that typing is difficult on a small phone. It is important to take the context of these comments into account. The smart phones they are referring to in this interview are iPhone models 4s and 5s with screen sizes of 3,5 and 4 inches respectively and not the later iPhone models with larger screens. Most

student-teachers had early model iPhones (only one student-teacher had an Android phone) and indicated that they later model iPhones with larger screens were too expensive for them. However, as she explains later on (line 147) it is a good tool for other purposes such as Instagram. This discussion shows how student-teachers add nuances to the choice of their tools to engage in certain practices. It also shows how they are constrained by the characteristics of the digital tools they have for certain practices while at the same time these tools can create affordances for other practices.

In another focus group interview, with student-teachers from a parallel section, they indicated that their selection of tools is not just bound by the availability of the tool, but also by what Gee (2014) calls the effective ability of the user to put that tool to use.

Excerpt 4: Extract from a focus group interview with student-teachers

- 334 June: {TH: better nah if I type than when I write I can read it easier}  
335 INT: {TH: what is easier typing or writing}  
336 June: {TH: typing is easier to read}  
337 Toey: when I'm in class or when I am {TH: at home}  
338 June: {TH: in class (.) suppose that we can take it with us it's easier right if we can type}  
339 Toey: {TH: mmh depends on your hands (.) right (.) if we're in a lecture and I need to write something fast}  
340 Nu: {TH: then typing would be faster}  
341 Toey: I am not good at type {TH: I can't do it}

The excerpt from this focus group interview shows the response of June, Toey and Nu on the use of tools that was also discussed in excerpt 3. June, Toey and Nu however, also discussed if using a laptop or a tablet would be easier in the case they were allowed to use it in class. This is currently not allowed by the teachers in their program. June says (line 334) that she would rather type since typed text is easier for her to read. She adds to that this would also be the case if she would be able to take it

in the classroom. Nu (line 340) agrees with her. Both Nu and June indicated previously that they are good at typing. Toey however says (line 339) that it depends on what she would do with it in the classroom and that for some quick note taking she would probably prefer to hand write. She adds later on to this (line 341) that this is the case because she is not good at typing, which she confirms again by repeating it in Thai after she made her point in English. These examples show that the choice to use certain tools to mediate their practices, both digital tools and other tools, is an individual decision based on the action they take with them, the context of use, and their 'effective ability' to put the tools to use.

### 5.7 Practices and scales of time

In the section above, I have discussed the practices of the student-teachers and the lecturer, the relative situated potential of the tools that mediate their practices and the social spaces that they construct by engaging in these practices. In this section, I discuss the time scales upon which these actions and activities take place and how shorter events accumulate and interact with longer processes. The practices discussed above cycle through moments of action where they converge to enable the actors to take action. However, these activities are not cycling in tandem on similar time scales. Some activities take place on recurring, but faster time scales such as a moment of instruction in the classroom, a comment made on a Facebook status update, or a 'like' on a picture on Instagram. Other activities cycle over slower time scales. A class can last an hour, a course can span sixteen weeks, and a Line chat or a discussion on Facebook in the comments section of a status update can take up several days. Activities can thus be said to take place on varying time scales with the potential of faster activities adding up to slower, longer processes of activity (Lemke, 2000). The student-teachers in the vignette, for instance, are seen engaging in these shorter actions, such as reading a Facebook news feed or chatting on Line messenger, which are sustained throughout the day and cycle across a network of both physical and social spaces. The learning activities, such as a moment of instruction or watching a video and filling

out an evaluation form in the classroom, seem to be, based on the observations, limited in their ability to be sustained over a longer period of time. In learning theories and pedagogical approaches the potential of learning activities to be sustained beyond their moment of action is often defined as the process of taking learning outside the classroom. In his discussion of situated learning, Gee (2004) argues for instance that for classroom learning to be effective, it should draw on those learning processes, and be contiguous with the literacy practices, that the learner engages in outside the classroom. He differentiates between instructed processes and cultural processes and hints at the fact that the latter are more effective in literacy development as learners are engaging in these literacy practices in a more effective way on a daily basis outside the institutional environment. From the perspective of discourse itineraries, this would mean that the literacy practices and discourses that are part of the cultural processes outside the classroom would actively be drawn upon during moments of actions, and connect moments of action, in the classroom where practices intersect. Approaches in second language acquisition, like the communicative approach and task-based learning (Ellis, 2003; Thomas and Reinders, 2010), often employ (digitally mediated) real-world tasks to emulate real-world processes. These emulated real-world processes are used to draw on the communicative practices and linguistic resources used for communication outside the classroom to facilitate the transfer of communicative skills developed inside and outside the classroom.

Lemke (1998, 2000) argues that the potential influence that various processes have on each other in social-ecosystems is situated in the relative time-scales of these processes. Longer, slower processes such as the ability to run vocabulary learning activities in the EFL classroom are hardly affected by shorter, faster events such as a short moment of pedagogical instruction. However, Lemke argues that interaction between processes functioning on various time scales is possible only through the process of semiotic heterochrony. This process is defined as “longer-term processes and shorter-term events linked by a material object that functions in both cases semiotically as well as materially”

(Lemke, 2000:281). The events and practices that the student-teachers in the vignette engage in also create the affordance of heterochrony. In the morning and the afternoon, they are planning and producing the materials for the self-access learning activity. This process runs over the course of six to eight hours of collaboration between six student-teachers. This process in itself was built up out of a number of smaller and shorter events, such as cutting shapes, printing pictures, editing text, gluing paper and so forth which are all relatively mundane actions.

However, this group also engaged in a number of other events such as drawing models of visual presentations on a sketchpad, looking up information online, and watching YouTube clips. These are all semiotic artifacts that have the potential to create the affordance of heterochrony. The models they drew and the discussion and negotiation that ensued were all short and fast events. However, the discussion reminded Noi of a model, the 3d-popup book, that she had seen used somewhere before. She explained the model to her group mates and they decide to try it out. An then looked up short two- to three-minute long instructional videos on YouTube on how to make these models. In a normal course assignment this group would have followed the handout, on which the lecturer specified how information should be presented. Their alternative way of planning with the short events of Noi remembering a solution for a 3d-model, and An searching for the exact model and watching instructional videos on how to make these models, allowed for heterochrony and changed the otherwise stable practice of 'producing instructional material' for this course assignment. In this example, the sketchpad with all the models, Noi's memory of the 3d-model (with its materiality temporarily captured in speech), and the YouTube clips, have semiotic affordances that created the potential to let short events interact with longer, more stable processes of producing course assignments. The concept of heterochrony is adopted as a theoretical tool in this study to analyze how the current use of technology inside the classroom makes meaningful links to the digital practices of the student-teachers outside the classroom. In addition, it will also be used to evaluate the pedagogical

potential of the out-of-class digital learning and literacy practices of the student-teachers for the use of in-class learning and teaching.

## 5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has theorized a framework of mediated action, sites of engagement and social space against of background of the affordance and constraints created by the tools that mediated the literacy practices of the student-teachers in this study. The student-teachers have shown that they use forms of digital technology and other tools to situate their literacy practices relatively free from space and time. These tools are carefully chosen based on configurations of affordances and constraints of the tools, their own effective ability to use these tools and the context in which these tools are appropriate. The implications of the current observations are that student-teachers' literacy practices, discourses and semiotic artifacts create networks of connected social spaces through which a number of practices co-exist and cycle. These theoretical concepts will be applied in chapter 6 to analyze their in-class English literacy practices and how they use digital technology as a tool to engage in these practices. These observations will then be compared with their out-of-class digital English literacy practices in chapter 7 and further explored in chapter 8 in the wider context of the use of digital technology and English literacy practices in Thai society.

## **Chapter 6: Learning, English Literacy and Digital Tools inside the Classroom**

### 6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I theorized a framework of space, learning geographies, sites of engagement, and time scale for studying the effects of digital media on the learning of Thai student-teachers of English. In addition, I proposed that the concepts of sites of engagement and heterochrony allow us to analyze how tools of mediation such as computers and smart phones and semiotic artifacts such as PowerPoint presentations and YouTube videos can create meaningful links between the different social spaces like classrooms and dormitory rooms. These links can become part of a network of connected spaces, or a nexus of relations between spaces (Leander et al, 2010). In this chapter, I will apply these theoretical tools to analyze and discuss the literacy practices that participants engage in as part of their B.Ed. courses in the classroom. The chapter will start with a description of the construction of the classroom as a social space. Applying Lemke's (2005b) notion of social semiotic formations, I will describe how the practices both the teacher and the student-teachers engage in are signifiers that give meaning to the nexus of practice that constitutes the classroom as a social space. Next, I will describe three moments of action in the form of vignettes taking place in the classroom that illustrate the English learning and literacy practices of the student teachers. These three moments of action are then analyzed to describe the social spaces these practices create, the trajectories of actions and practices leading up to and away from these sites of engagement, and, the larger networks of connected spaces that these practices link together.

### 6.2 Room 209 and the classroom: student teachers' social practices and the construction of social spaces at the university

This chapter starts by answering an important question: what is a classroom at this research site? Or more specifically, what practices, discourses and tools intersect that construct a social space

that the student-teachers and teachers at this research site identify as a classroom? As Scollon and Scollon (2003) argue, a physical space is never just an empty container that is filled with practices and discourses. Instead, they argue that discourses, actions, tools and semiotic artifacts such as signs construct the classroom as a social space by their emplacement in the physical world. However, this construction should be seen as the result of a dialectic relationship in which the emplacement of these elements in this particular space also indexes their meaning.

For example, throughout the data collection I met the student-teachers as part of focus group interviews. And these focus group interviews were conducted in a particular space, room 209 in the building of the faculty of education. It was at the end of a hallway of the second floor of a building housing the faculty of education. Outside the room there was a sign in Thai that said "Take off your shoes". The room had a white board, a projector, a computer, desks, chairs, old dusty handouts stacked in a corner, everything that could also be found in a classroom. It could easily have been a classroom, but for the times that I met with the participants in 209 it was our interview room. During our conversations we frequently made reference to room 209 as 'here', such as when I asked the students what the difference was between talking to their foreign teachers in English in the classroom or talking to me 'here' in English. The student-teachers indicated that it was not the same as talking to their teachers in the classroom since there were different patterns of expectation, different practices they engaged in, and different relationships between the students and the foreign or Thai teachers. We rearranged the desks in a small circle to make sure that the video could capture all participants in one frame. Everyone had comfortable desk chairs to sit on and not everyone was wearing a uniform at all times. We called each other by our nicknames indicating a level of informality in our discussion. I asked questions and they answered, and, asked questions in return. We code-switched a lot and the participants often made mistakes in their English vocabulary and grammar and I often made mistakes in Thai. During the interviews we also laughed, joked and used our smart phones at certain times.

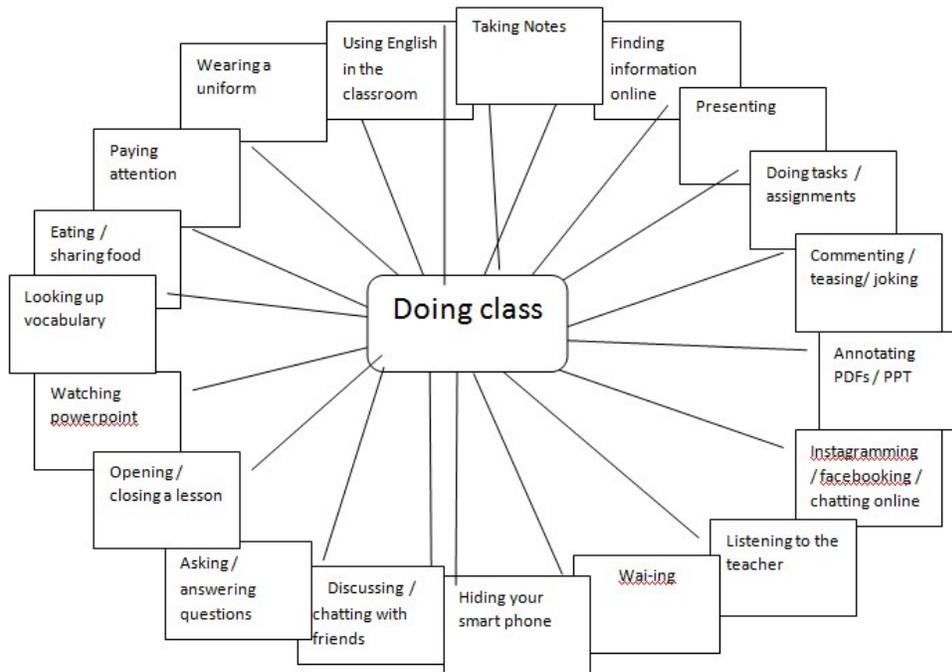
Engaging in these practices and using the tools we had to take these actions allowed us to enact the identities of interviewer and interviewees. In other words, even though the material and semiotic artifacts in the room are also used as tools to mediate teaching actions, we used them to take different actions, to relate to each other in different ways, and to engage in different literacy practices which created a different social space. It turned room 209 into a space where we had our meetings and adopted a number of practices that were normative and acceptable for everyone as part of 'doing a focus group interview'. Drawing on the idea of social semiotic formations (Lemke, 1995), it could be argued that we were engaging in socially meaningful practices that allowed us to make sense out of the situation and make sense to each other. By engaging in these socially meaningful practices we also created a historical space, albeit a temporary historical space. In this space, we engaged in a number of practices that were normative for this space such as not wearing a uniform, not taking off our shoes, using our smart phones and so forth, which were transgressive practices for instance for other spaces at the university (and for this space at other times).

#### 6.2.1 Doing class: practices producing the classroom as a social space at the university

Although quite a few of the practices that we engaged in during the focus group interviews were also observed in the classroom, they were mediated by different discourses and intersected with different practices, material and semiotic artifacts, and, social relationships between the participants. In general, the classrooms had similar material and semiotic artifacts as Room 209, however, they were used in different ways and situated in different positions. Computer hardware was placed around the teacher's desk and the students were aligned in rows of seats facing the whiteboard and the teacher. During the classroom observations, the student-teachers engaged in a number of socially meaningful practices that together could be regarded as part of the larger discourse practice of 'doing class'. A list of these practices was kept during the process of data collection and added to when a practice was

observed in more than half of the class observations. These practices have been mapped in figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Common practices observed in the classroom



The student-teachers engage in a number of different practices that converge at moments of action and construct the classroom as a social space. Some of these practices are foregrounded and form an essential part of the discourse practice of doing class such as wearing a uniform, wai-ing (Thai way of greeting by folding the hands) the teacher, sitting in rows and performing the typical Thai opening and closing rituals and greetings that mark the beginning and end of a lesson. The latter is carried out in English for instance if the course is an English language course or in Thai if the course is a regular subject course. The majority of these practices have become internalized practices and this is demonstrated when these routines go wrong, for instance, when the class leader uses the wrong text to lead in the opening and closing rituals of a lesson. During one of the observations the class leader and also one of the participants in the study, Bom, led in the ritual by using the discourse that is used for the high school level, “students please stand up”. Immediately, the whole class burst out in laughter. He

quickly corrected himself and they followed through with the correct response. There is not a written rule in the student handbook or the syllabus that specifies what the exact text is. This discourse has been internalized over the years of engaging in this practice and only one particular text signals the meaning of opening and closing a lesson and leads in this discourse practice. In other words, this particular discourse and action index a particular meaning in this social and physical space at particular time intervals whereas in other contexts, it might have another meaning. Similarly, using an incorrect text will not have the same effect and it is immediately noted as transgressive.

Another foregrounded practice is that of wearing a uniform. During the observations several students were reprimanded both by Thai and foreign teachers for minor shortcomings in their uniform such as unpolished shoes, rolled up sleeves or missing neckties. Although teachers were never observed making any comments in advance about how uniforms should be worn, this practice was mediated by a very salient discourse. Model pictures of 'correct uniforms', hairstyle and shoes, with accompanying explanation, are displayed around campus on billboards, on one of the many LCD screens broadcasting campus TV, on the doors of the elevator, on the university website, and in the annual student handbook. However, the teachers believed this discourse and practice to be important enough for the construction of the classroom as a social space for it to be foregrounded at times and for them to point out transgressive behavior by reprimanding those student-teachers who failed to comply with this discourse. The practices described here form a set of socio-educational and cultural practices which are for the Thai student-teachers an essential part of their participation in the



Figure 3 Model pictures of correct uniforms

classroom and subsequently also part of the nexus of practice of teaching and learning at this particular university.

### 6.3 Facebooking, Instagramming and searching for academic information: the digital literacy practices of Thai student-teachers in the classroom

Contrary to the discourse foregrounded by the lecturers which prohibits the use of digital devices in the classroom, student-teachers are observed to engage in a number of different digital practices in the classroom at any point during the lesson. The vignette in the previous chapter already described how the student-teachers frequently used digital devices during class time. During the classroom observations, students were frequently observed to be 'Facebooking or Instagramming' or using their smart phones for other purposes. In contrast to the strict enforcement of uniform rules, the digital practices that the student-teachers engaged in inside the classroom were not foregrounded as transgressive: they either went unnoticed by the teacher or they were noticed but left unmentioned. Of particular interest to the current study are the discourses and practices on the use of smart phones in the classroom since they allow students to engage literacy practices inside the classroom and provide access to sources of information beyond what they have been provided with by the teacher. The focus of analysis will not only be on how these discourses, practices and tools create access to literacy events, but also what discourse practices student-teachers engage in that allow them to effectively participate in these literacy events. Kalman (2005) makes an important point by arguing that the availability of literacy resources or tools to access literacy events such as books, smart phones and so forth, is not enough to develop literacy. Instead, learners also need to develop the literacy skills, tools and practices, or what Kalman calls modalities of appropriation, to navigate routes to literacy events and effectively participate in them.

The classroom observations showed that student-teachers used their phones quite often in the classroom. Although sometimes they made attempts to hide them under their desks or behind a book or a handout, most of the time their phones were on their desks. These observations evidence a practice which is contrary to the strong discourse on the use of smart phones in the classroom voiced by both the teachers and student-teachers. All of the lecturers interviewed indicated that the use of smart phones while they were teaching was not allowed. Lecturers referred to 'teaching' here as moments in the classroom at which they were 'lecturing' or giving explanations. Excerpt 3 below is taken from an interview with two junior Thai lecturers in the department who were observed during this study. In this research interview, the lecturers were asked about the use of technology in the classroom both as a tool for lecturers and for the learners.

Excerpt 5. A transcript from a research interview with two junior lecturers in the department

173 Lecturer 1: ahm:: (1.0) in Thailand when we teach them (.) we don't like them to use (.) ANYthing  
(1.0) when we (.) [teach ] when we teaching for:: (.) for them (.) but after (.)  
after class and ahm: (.) when they break maybe they use telephone (.) and notebook

174 Lecturer 2 [when we teaching]

175 (1.0)

176 Int: OK so you don't really like it when they use it in class (.) technology like smartphones  
or:: (.) but they can use it during the break and outside of class

177 Lecturer 2: yes

178 Int: so but [ but ]

179 Lecturer 1: [{TH: sup}pose that we ask them something and they cannot answer we give  
them permission to use it}

180 Int: OH ok ok

181 Lecturer 1: {TH: because Thai kids (.) they never find what we want ask them (.) if they use technology they are on Facebook}

In this excerpt the two lecturers indicate in line 173 that they would rather not have students engaging in any other practices, including digital practices, while they are teaching. They make a clear reference to their geographical place, “in Thailand when we teach”, highlighting their perception that this preference is the norm for Thailand but that maybe other countries might have different rules. As a result of this rule, student-teachers’ digital practices are then restricted to a time frame, during a break, and a space, outside the classroom (line 173), and only allowed when specific permission is given to perform a certain task that is part of their teaching (line 179). The reason they stated for their preference (line 181) is interesting. The teacher here makes two important claims, and both claims were recurring themes throughout the rest of the study. First of all, she suggests that Thai student-teachers (line 181) lack the knowledge or literacies to find information in order to answer the questions they ask them in class. Second, she claims that if the student-teachers are using digital technology that they will only use it to access social media. This assumption is repeated by other teachers. The following excerpts are taken from a research interview with two other lecturers in the department and provide some more insight into the reasons why student-teachers are not allowed to use digital technology in the classroom. Both lecturers were teaching the participants during the course of data collection and in the excerpt below were asked the same questions as the lecturers in the previous excerpt.

Excerpt 6. A transcript from a research interview with two teachers in the department

135 Lecturer 3: use Facebook and Instagram {TH: they play this game that game (.) the Thai kids (.) but they never do anything academic with it}

*(Lines 136-148 are not included)*

149 Int: ok I see (.) so you don't think the student use their phone much for learning↑and  
knowledge

150 Lecturer 3: NO no (.) {TH: never (.) only some words (.) and they find some information if we give  
them a topic (.) they'll search for it}

The teacher quoted here in this excerpt is a senior lecturer in the department. She suggests that the participants never use digital technology to engage in any study or academic related practices (line 135). When the question is restated several turns later, she makes a claim similar to the other teachers that, apart from their nonacademic practices, student-teachers only use their smart phones to look up some words or to carry out tasks given by the teacher (line 150). A similar discourse is found in the focus group interviews. Student-teachers confirm that their lecturers generally do not allow them to use their smart phones in the classroom, only when this is considered to be part of a task. The following excerpt is taken from a focus group interview with the student-teachers in which they were asked if they used their smart phones in class and what they did with these devices.

Excerpt 7. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

313 Som: not really (.) some times only some times

314 Noon: only sometimes some subject

315 Jenny: usually they do not allow because we only use it for Facebook (.) teachers do not allow  
us to use it

316 Int: do they say you are only using it for Facebook or is that also true

317 All: (start laughing)

318 Int: no it's just a question like do they think you are only using it for Facebook↑

319 Jenny: YES they think we only [(.) ] we use it for another things but not for  
education

320 Som: [ninety-nine percent]

321 Int: ok but what ARE you using it for in the classroom

322 Jenny: in the classroom↑

323 Int: yeah if you're using it

324 Jenny: Facebook of course

In this excerpt, the student-teachers confirm not only that their teachers restrict their use of smart phones at certain times in the classroom (lines 313-314), but also reproduce the assumption that they simply use them for Facebook (line 315). Interestingly, the participants from one section claimed that this was also the case (line 324). The main reason they state for using their phones in class for social media is that they are bored. Participants from the other section answered in a similar way, but elaborated a bit more on the conditions under which smart phones were used. Here they were asked if they were allowed to use their smart phone in the classroom.

Excerpt 8. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

487 All: (nod)

488 An: yes

489 Int: for anything or does it need to be related to learning

490 An: only dictionary

491 Int: ok only the dictionary

492 An: and sometimes teacher ask about

493 Tik: question

- 494 An: about question (1.0) yeah sometimes I use it for search for the answer
- 495Int: ok so it's not a problem to use your smartphone in the classroom (.) the teachers don't mind
- 496 An: no
- 497 Noi: some teacher don't like [it when you use] your smartphone
- 498 Cherry: [yeah don't like ]
- 499 An: if you use Facebook or Line teacher don't like but if you use (1.0)
- 500 Noi: Google or internet they're ok
- 501 Int: ok (.) and how do they know
- 502 An: I think they can tell
- 503 Noi: if I play Facebook I will look at smartphone always for a long time but if you search for some word it will be for (1.0)
- 504 May: a short time

The student-teachers in this excerpt provided a more elaborate account of their use of smart phones in the classroom and indicated that the use of smart phones is allowed if it serves a learning purpose, such as looking up vocabulary. In addition, they also showed that they were aware of how they engaged in these digital practices and how they used their smart phones in the classroom. In lines 502 – 504 An, Noi and May indicate that their teachers most likely know by the way they handle their smart phones what they are doing with them. These excerpts show that the discourse restricting the use of smart phones or other digital devices in the classroom is foregrounded in their classroom practices. Both lecturers and student-teachers have indicated that the use of smart phones is seen as a transgressive practice, unless it is incorporated as part of a learning assignment or learning activity. This restriction

seems to be based on the assumption that the student-teachers are merely using smart phones to access social media, an assumption the student-teachers reproduce.

However, despite the fact that this discourse is foregrounded by both student-teachers and lecturers, this discourse is not reproduced in any practices in the classroom that prevents student-teachers from using their smart phones. Student-teachers engage in a wide range of digital practices in the classroom and the lecturers do not take any direct action to prevent this from happening. Both the observations and the interviews with the student-teachers indicate that student-teachers self-regulate their digital practices and the use of smart phones in the classroom by making sure they either cover them up, or, use their smart phones in a way that does not prompt any direct action from the teacher to enforce the rules. This discrepancy between the discourse on the use of smart phones and the actual practices involving the use of smart phones in the classroom demonstrates an ambivalence in which the potential of smart phones as ways of accessing information is acknowledged, but the student-teachers are not considered to be capable or responsible enough to capitalize on the opportunity to put access to this information to good use. A good example of this ambivalence is evidenced in the following vignette, which was the only time during my observations that students were asked to do an activity which involved the independent use of smart phones during a lesson.

#### Vignette 2: Description of a learning activity using digital technology in class

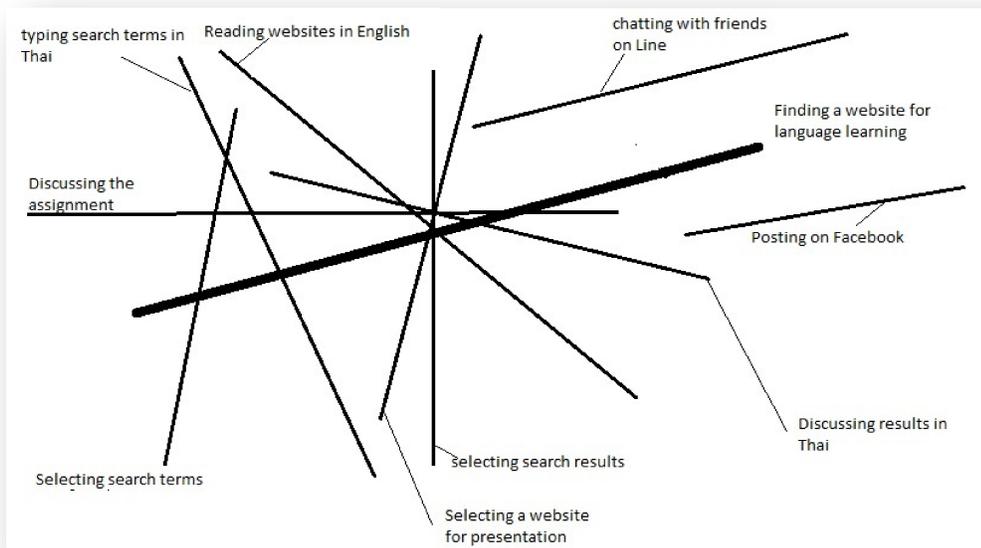
We are five minutes into the lesson when the teacher asks the students to take out their smart phones, and find a website that has some benefit for learning English. The students are looking a bit surprised and confused, but get to the task straight away. They have five minutes to do the task. Most of the student-teachers work in pairs or small groups and are using Google to search. Most of their searches are done in Thai. The group work involves little collaboration and students only briefly show each other

samples of what they have found before going back to their screens. During and after the task the student-teachers are still using their smart phones both to look up more information but also to make quick status updates on Facebook, check their Instagram feeds and chat on Line messenger. After five minutes the groups are all asked to send two representatives to the front of the class to show the websites on the overhead projector. Some groups have difficulties in finding their websites again and try to replicate their search queries on the overhead projector on the basis of their handwritten notes. The search terms comprise lengthy sentences in Thai. Some groups manage to retrieve their websites and present them to the class whereas other groups are not able to do this. The websites presented are varied and include the website of the US Department of State, the British council website, several dictionary websites and Rong-Chang.com, a Chinese website hosting free online English lessons. The presentations are all done in Thai and the student-teachers have a hard time explaining the purpose of the website. All groups receive a round of applause even if they were unable to retrieve their websites. The teacher makes only a few comments during the presentations. The activity is repeated after a short break but then with five groups each looking for a website with a specific theme: testing, a teaching activity, games, worksheets, and, media. This activity generated similar results. After the activity was finished students were told to upload their websites onto the class Facebook group.

The vignette above describes a part of the lesson where the student-teachers are required to use their smart phones to complete a learning activity. The actions and practices described above ran over a twenty minute time window. In order to understand how digital technology is used in the classroom I focus the analysis on the site of engagement and the practices that converge at the moments of action instead of analyzing the activity as unit. The literacy practices that converge at these moments of action in the classroom can then be traced along their semiotic trajectories outside the classroom to see how they relate and enable moments of action to take place in other social spaces. This comparison can create insight into how the practices in one action and social space are related to

each other and how they create networks of related nodes. Figure 4 below shows a visual presentation of the practices that converge and intersect at these moments of action.

Figure 4 intersecting practices during a digitally mediated activity in the classroom.



Student-teachers engage in a number of digital practices and digital English literacy practices such as typing search terms, selecting search results, reading websites in English and selecting sources. What is interesting in this vignette is the range of practices that are simultaneously taking place and converging at these moments of action. Some intersect whereas others co-exist without interacting. Another interesting observation is that different practices are foregrounded and backgrounded at different times. Chatting on Line might be foregrounded at one point whereas selecting search results is foregrounded at another moment. The foregrounding and backgrounding of practices was observed throughout the classroom observations. Student-teachers strategically foreground and background these practices to relieve the tension between those practices that are normative for the historical space of the classroom, and those practices that they bring to the classroom as part of their individual historical bodies that are considered transgressive such as chatting, facebooking and so forth.

Furthermore,, the practices observed during this, and other learning activities, are not unique to this moment of action. On the contrary, the majority of the digital practices and digital English literacy practices observed here were also seen cycling through other moments of action where they intersected with other practices. The digital English literacy practices that student-teachers engaged in at these moments of action in the classroom were familiar to them and it is therefore surprising that the outcome of the task, i.e., students present a website beneficial for English language learning, is not entirely met in most cases. It seems that the way in which student-teachers are asked to engage in these in-class digital literacy practices does not lead to the desired outcome despite the fact that these practices are part of their individual historical bodies. This task outcome then, reaffirms the previous comments made by the teachers in which they stated that the student-teachers rarely engage in any digitally mediated academic practices and that they cannot find information online if they are tasked to do so.

However, in the follow up focus group interviews with the student-teachers in this vignette, it became apparent that there were multiple other discourses in place which mediated this moment of action and played a role in how it was shaped. First of all, the student-teachers indicated that although they engage in a lot of searching online, they always search for information with a specific goal as opposed to the vaguely worded task they performed. They indicated that they search for a range of different topics on a daily basis such as information on teaching and learning activities, English language information that they need at that particular moment, but also more general topics of their interest such as cooking, dogs and cats, celebrities, movies, music and so forth. For the current assignment they indicated that it did not have a clearly specified goal and were largely drawing on online resources they already knew. This means that although digital literacy practices that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom are part of moments of action in the classroom, they are mediated by different discourses in place. This produces a different outcome of this literacy event in comparison to how student-teachers

would engage in these practices outside the classroom. The criteria they applied to select resources for the task in vignette one are described by the student-teachers in the excerpt below. They were asked how they knew the website they found contained good information for their task.

Excerpt 9. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 367 Jenny: {TH: I already tried it out(.) sometimes I don't but I see a lot of English}
- 368 Int: ok so you tried it first (.) you already tried this particular website
- 369 Jenny: yeah but sometimes I don't know if it's good or bad but it seems they have many information in English so I think it would be good
- 370 SOM: it would be good
- 371 Noon: yeah

This excerpt shows that the criteria they used to evaluate their search results were mainly based on the fact that they already knew the website, or that it contains a lot of information in English. The language in which the search was carried out is a second them that played an important role. The student-teachers indicated that they use a mix of English and Thai to search but that it the actual choice of language is dependent on the aim of the search and the quality of information they are looking for.

Excerpt 10. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 513 Int: ok so when would you search in Thai and when would you search in English
- 514 Jenny: in Thai when the information need by my Thai teachers
- 515 SOM: like they want us to create a lesson plan right and I think if I search in Thai it might be basic {TH: I want it to be different from other people}
- 516 Noon: it maybe different and more harder

517 SOM: to get a new idea

518 Int: if you're searching in thai

519 SOM: I'm afraid it may be the same as with other people [so I search English ]

520 Noon: [same other people]

521 Jenny: {TH: suppose that we search in Thai we are afraid that the information we find is going to be the [same as other people] }

522 Noon: [similar similar information]

523 Int: ok ok so I see I see so when you're searching in English you can find something new

524 Noon: [different ]

525 Jenny: [find something different]

526 Int: so why not always search in English ↑

527 SOM: {TH: have you ever done that ↑ }

528 Jenny: {TH: no never }

529 Noon: {TH: that would be the same as doing research }

530 Jenny: {TH: but in the end there's not going to be a difference from other people }

531 Noon: {TH: the content is not going to be that different }

In this excerpt the student-teachers indicate that searching in Thai is used for their regular searches online and if it is done for their Thai teachers (line 514). However, in the lines following (515-522) they argue that there is a difference in the quality or originality of the information you find when searching in Thai. English then is used to find something new and something different. However, this is only done in a limited number of situations as they indicate in lines 528 – 531. When asked why they would not search in English most of the time if that generates better search results, the student-

teachers answered that searching only in English felt to them as something that would involve doing research and that the information from these English search results was not always a good match for the type of assignments they needed to complete for their course work. This demonstrates how different discourses in place play a role in the decision student-teachers make in the language they use to participate in these literacy events. The choice to search in Thai instead of English, in spite of knowing that the latter could provide better information, also illustrates their attitude to engage in these types of classroom literacy events. The field notes from that observation corroborated the unstructured nature of these learning activities and the absence of feedback or a direct need to perform well on these learning activities. I recorded the following during the observation of the class in vignette 2:

Time	Observation
9.48	The group presents some examples but the website turns out to be a site on teaching history and part of a social studies curriculum. Students have difficulties pulling up the websites. Students seem to become distracted and are still on their phones. Group ends up not finding it but still get applause and is off the hook
9.57	Next group is getting their website up. A website for songs. Songs turn out to be in Thai. Internet too slow to load the page. Group's explanation is still only showing examples.
10.03	Presentations of groups become more unstructured. Students are talking to each other. No results but still applause.

Throughout this whole episode the teacher did not provide any feedback and was positioned toward to side of the classroom. The discourses that co-exist at these moments of action in vignette one create more insights into the way that students engage in the digital literacy events in the rare occasions they occur as part of a lesson. The excerpts above and the vignette indicate that the digital literacy events that are part of a learning activity are mediated by a number of discourses in place, such as searching for information, the choice of language for particular search strategies and their criteria for selecting

resources that would fulfill the task requirement. These discourses in place play an important role in how moments of action involving digital learning actions are shaped and contribute to the construction of the classroom as a social space. In addition, despite the fact that these digital literacy practices are familiar to the student-teachers, the way in which they converge at moments of action and the discourses that mediate these learning activities are important factors in the effectiveness of the use of digital technology in the classroom. An ineffective display of the use of digital literacy practices by the student-teachers potentially reaffirms the existing ideas and discourses held by their lecturers on the inability of student-teachers to use digital technology constructively in the classroom.

#### 6.4 The literacy events of Thai student-teachers in the classroom

This section of the chapter describes the English language learning and literacy practices of the student-teachers as they cycle through three moments of action in three different classrooms. Three vignettes are used to describe these moments of action. The vignettes have been derived from field notes of classroom observations, focus group interviews, and, the use of the wearable camera as a tool to capture the actions of the student-teachers during classroom observations. The vignettes are used to further illustrate how digital English literacy practices converge at moments of action in the classroom and how this intersection of practices constructs the classroom as a social space. I will first briefly introduce the most frequently occurring English literacy practices observed in the classroom and then discuss how English is used in classes with a Thai lecturer and in classes with a foreign lecturer.

##### 6.4.1 English literacy events in the Thai university classroom

In language learning contexts such as Thailand where English is scarcely spoken outside the classroom, the classroom becomes an important site of English language production. The student-teachers frequently emphasized the importance of opportunities to use in English in the classroom

during the focus group interviews. They mentioned that the classroom as a site of production is 'safe'; since they are performing in English in front of their friends, they feel more confident because the questions and answers are predictable, and they feel that one of their friends can always help out in the case of a breakdown in communication. However, despite this positive evaluation of the classroom as a social space and its potential positive impact on the use of English, the results of the map task (an activity used to map the digital literacy practices of the student-teachers across the various social spaces) showed that the range of functions carried out in English in the classroom is relatively limited. Figure 5 below shows an overview of what the student-teachers indicated they used English in the classroom for.

Figure 5 Synthesis of the map task showing the actions taken in English inside the classroom

Action	Frequency
Ask questions to foreign teacher	5
Answer the foreign teacher	6
Talking with the foreign teacher	7
	2
Do activities (English camp course)	5
Doing activities (speaking)	4
completing worksheets/activities	8
Find vocabulary	3
Translate English → Thai	7
Presentations (foreign Classroom)	

Thirteen out of the seventeen participating student-teachers completed the map task and the table above shows that range of actions taken in English is relatively narrow. The most frequently mentioned actions were interacting with the foreign teacher, giving presentations, looking up vocabulary and doing activities or exercises in English. This narrow range of actions performed in English in the classroom was also confirmed by the classroom observations. However, the frequency of the use of English in the classroom varies greatly between participants. In the remainder of this section I will discuss the ways student-teachers engage in English literacy practices in the classroom with both Thai lecturers and foreign lecturers with the aim to identify what the differences between these practices are and how they relate to other literacy practices outside the classroom.

#### 6.4.2 English literacy events in the Thai classroom: “when some of them use English it’s kinda strange”

This section discusses how the student-teachers use English in the classroom on courses taken with Thai teachers and will illustrate several English literacy events student-teachers engage in. This section will draw both on the first vignette as well as a second vignette presented below.

##### Vignette 3: A learning activity in Ms P lesson

The teacher, Ms P., puts away the attendance list and starts her lesson. A PowerPoint presentation is projected on the wall behind her and the students have a paper copy on their desks. She reads the slides aloud and does a short review of the previous lesson, five good characteristics of teaching. She starts reading the sentence from the slide and stops half way through the sentence to have the students finish the sentence in a choral repetition. The answers are on the slide and the whole class finishes the sentence. One of the examples she gives is that activities are important in teaching and that you cannot simply read from the PowerPoint as it would be too boring. Some students noticeably snicker a bit when

she says this. Students continue to highlight the headings and main points with different colors; others are just looking at the slides. After a couple of slides, An takes out her phone and quickly copies and pastes some pictures of clothes she sells online into a chat message on Line messenger. After that she puts her phone away again and continues underlining and color marking the slides. Cherry is checking the newsfeed on her Instagram account and shows Noi some of the travel pictures on her phone. Tik is on her tablet looking up vocabulary items from the slides and translates some of the key words from Thai into English. The teacher then sets the students a task to prepare an idea for how to introduce a lesson on a specific language feature. She reads instructions from the slide which seem to come straight from the teachers' book in Thai: "Let the students talk to each other and discuss...". The students get in groups and start preparing for the task. During the preparation students frequently make use of their phones to look up words on the themes they are preparing, search for teaching ideas online, and chat with their friends on messenger. In the end each group presents their teaching activity in front of the class. During the presentations, the explanations of the key concepts are all done in Thai after which the target item is labeled with an English term. Some groups give examples of target structures or sentences they would use in English in the classroom such as 'how many people are there in your family?' The students answer in Thai after which the Thai term is labeled with an English lexical item. When May, in the role of a student volunteering in one of the presentations, is the first one to use English the whole class bursts out in a loud "Oh Hoo".

The classroom in the vignette 3 describes several moments of action during a thirty-minute time window. The student-teachers engage in a number of different literacy practices which include 'completing the sentence', 'answering questions', 'taking notes', 'annotating powerpoints', 'watching powerpoints', listening to explanations', 'chatting with friends', 'checking Instagram', 'chatting on Facebook', 'looking up vocabulary', 'giving a short presentation on a teaching technique', 'doing group work' and so forth. These literacy events are almost exclusively Thai literacy events and mediated by

Thai semiotic artifacts and discourses such as the slides, the handouts, students' annotations, and, the instructions and explanations given by the teacher. The only English literacy events they engaged in were observed during the group work stage when some of the students looked up standard phrases that they could use as memorized chunks of language during the presentations they were supposed to do later on in the lesson.

In order to find these phrases or examples, they either used their smart phones to look up these phrases online or drew upon the phrases they already knew. The presentations on how to teach a specific language feature in English were also conducted in Thai. Even though the objective was to present how to use English as the medium of instruction, the only time English was used in the presentations was when the prepared key phrases were pronounced. The only site of engagement involving the unplanned use of English was when May was asked to participate as a student. She took the opportunity to provide her answer in English and the class immediately responded with a loud "oh hoo". This reaction was observed throughout the observations when one of the student-teachers used English in the classroom but also during focus group interviews and helped me understand how the student-teachers viewed the use of English in the Thai classroom. In follow-up focus group interviews, this collective choral reaction was explained as context dependent and varying in its meaning. It could mean a mix of feelings such as admiration or envy, suspecting someone of showing off their skills, excitement and interest at other times, but never as overtly negative. Two students, Jenny and Tian worded their feelings in an insightful way that was shared by other students as well.

Excerpt 11: A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

259 Jenny: because normal we use in Thai (.) and when some of them use English it's kind of weird (1.0) kinda strange (.) I mean strange (.) just strange because we know we not use it but when some of us already use English for speak or listening or something like that (.) it's

just kinda strange and they just oh why why do you have to do that (.) like that yeah  
kinda jealous {TH: right or not (to Tian)}

260 Tian: {TH: yeah but also that we want to be able to do the same}

In this excerpt Jenny explains that using Thai as the language of communication and the medium of instruction is the norm in the classroom and using or speaking English is the exception, or as she phrased it: “kinda strange” (line 259). She also suggests that other people, less proficient speakers, might be slightly envious of those students using English in the classroom and that it even has the potential of disrupting a certain status quo in the classroom “why why do you have to do that”. This creates the impression that there is a shared belief that student-teachers do not have to use English in the classroom, or, that they are not required to obtain similar levels of proficiency. More important, it seems that displaying the ability to speak English proficiently in the classroom challenges this belief that a certain level of proficiency in English is the exception and not the rule. This forms an important discourse since it does not only challenge the ability of their classmates but also of their Thai lecturers who the student-teachers know struggle using English as the medium of instruction in the classroom. Interestingly, Jenny takes the opportunity here to explain this point to me, in the role of interviewer, in English. Tian however, is also quick to point out, in Thai, that “we want to be able to do the same”. With “we” she refers to herself and other less proficient speakers in their year. This creates the impression that there is a will to speak English well and to expend the efforts to attain higher levels of proficiency, but that there are possibly other factors preventing her, and others, from doing so.

In vignette 2, a similar observation can be made in the way that student-teachers use English in the classroom. This vignette also describes several moments of action during a thirty minute time window and students engage in fairly similar practices as in vignette two. The student-teachers were given instructions to find an English language learning website in Thai. Here the majority of the literacy

events that students engage in are in Thai. The interaction between the students was done in Thai as well as the majority of the online searches for English websites. Finally, their presentations, in which they showed the relevance of these websites, were also conducted in Thai. During the follow up focus group interview with the student-teachers, it became clear that despite the fact that these learning activities and literacy events are part of the longer process of becoming an English teacher, a clear requirement on the use of English in these activities or in the classroom in general was absent. This is surprising since both the lecturers and the student-teachers have pointed out that opportunities to use English are scarce in Thailand and that this is one of the main reasons for the low English proficiency levels in Thailand. The following excerpt is taken from a focus group interview with one of the research groups. The students were asked, on the basis of previous observations including the current vignette, why they used English or Thai as the language for their presentation. In this excerpt reference is made to another presentation as well in which they started in English and switched to Thai after two minutes in their presentation.

Excerpt 12. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

48 Int:           ok (.) alright(.) and one of the things I noticed was that not everything was focused on English right ↑ how did this work out (.) like were you supposed to teach in English or not (.) was it supposed to be focused on English or not (.) or was it up to you↑

49 Bank:       [up to me]

50 Jenny:       [up to us] (.) up to us (.) actually (1.0) yeah up to us

51 Bank:       {TH: come on tell him}

52 Int:        actually (.) you said (.) actually

53 (1.0)

- 54 Jenny: (smiles) actually she just wants us to present ehm (.) with Thai mostly (.) because I don't think she understands when we present I say (.) when we present about English yeah
- 55 Int: ok (1.0) so (.) yeah I observed there was very little English (.) being used during the presentations(.) I mean your group started with [English]
- 56 Jenny: [English] and then summarized in Thai
- 57 Int: yes
- 58 Jenny: yes (1.0) because we know that teacher and my classmate (makes gesture to PI who is sitting next to her) don't understand
- 59 Int: yeah ok so what was the choice to use English in certain parts or not use English in certain parts (.) when did you decide to use English in your presentation and demonstration and when did you decide to use Thai
- 60 Jenny: when
- 61 Noon: when (.) mostly when teacher decide
- 62 Jenny: decide about the teacher decide (.) yah it depends on them some of them just want us to present English (.) and mostly we work in English just for the foreigner teachers

This excerpt shows that the discourse on the use of English is influenced by a number of factors. First of all, the students seem to follow the language requirements set by the lecturer. The student-teachers argue that the reason for using Thai is that their Thai lecturers and some of the lower level students – she points in the direction of Tian here to illustrate who she means—lack the English proficiency skills to follow their presentation. However, this was only admitted reluctantly. At first, the student-teachers made it look like it was their individual choice, and therefore their responsibility, to either use Thai or English and that there is no further intervention in this from the lecturer. This would also mean that any implied criticism from my side would be directed at them rather than their lecturers.

However, the fact that Bank says in line 51 “come on tell him” to Jenny in Thai, indicates that there is a mutual understanding and a shared belief on the choices they make to present in either Thai or English. Their reluctance to mention this to me during the interview also shows that they are possibly not comfortable sharing this information beyond their own circle of friends. However, despite this discourse, the actions observed in the classroom show that they are willing to use English in the classroom even though this is not required and might even affect their grade in the case the teacher is unable to follow their presentation. At the same time, the majority of the student-teachers did not try to present in English and chose to use Thai as the medium of presentation. This means that there are various discourses on the use of English in the classroom present at these sites of engagement in the classroom. In some cases the use of English as the medium of communication is foregrounded, however, in most of the cases this is backgrounded. This has an important influence on which practices converge at these sites of engagement and how well engaging in these practices in the classroom as a social space makes meaningful connections to other social spaces through which these practices cycle. In other words, if the use of English in the Thai classroom is restricted or discouraged by the teacher, this social space will not be part of a larger nexus of relations with other social spaces in which student-teachers do actively engage in English literacy practices. Over time these practices are sedimented in the historical bodies of the student-teachers and the lecturers and become normative for this particular historical space. In this historical space, the use of English during literacy events can almost be seen as transgressive, or at least not normative. The instant reaction “oh hoo” that quite a few student-teachers are confronted with while using English in these literacy events illustrates the fact well that in the Thai classroom the use of English is not normative.

#### 6. 4.3 English literacy events in the classroom with foreign lecturers: opportunities, exposure and language practice

In the last section I looked at the use of English in the Thai classroom. In this section will look at how student-teachers engage in English literacy events in the classroom with a foreign teacher. Vignette 3 below describes the use of English in several literacy events as part of a peer teaching practice on a course taught by a foreign lecturer. She is from another country in Asia. Although she speaks English as a second language, she has a near native level of proficiency in English. The peer teaching practice that is described in the vignette is part of the assessment on a course on English camp activities in which student-teachers learn to create, plan, and, run English camp activities covering all four skills. The lecturer on this course requires that all teaching be done in English and that students create their own activities and materials. Although she is able to speak Thai, she will not allow students to use it as the medium of presentation or communication in the classroom. She indicated that she only uses Thai in those situations where there is a communication breakdown in English and this lack of understanding disrupts the flow of her lesson. This discourse on the medium of instruction is different from what has been observed in other courses with the Thai teachers.

#### Vignette 4: An account of a peer teaching practice activity in week 10

It is Wednesday morning in week 10 of the semester and the student-teachers have prepared a song they are going to peer teach in groups today as part of their English camp activities course. Jenny, Bank, Som and Noon are preparing their demonstration. The lyrics of the song are on a moveable whiteboard behind them and the students are all seated on the floor in front of them. Book starts the peer teaching practice by getting the students into seven lines:

- 1 Jenny: (claps her hands) first line here seven lines (2.0)
- 2 Class: (walk around to seat the group in seven lines)
- 3 Jenny: [one two three four five six seven]

- 4 Bank: [one two three four five six seven]
- 5 Bank: ok before we start I want to ask you (.) do you like singing and dancing↑
- 6 Class: YES
- 7 Bank: that's good
- 8 Som: ok and now we have a song for you (.) so now before the song we would like (.) quiet  
yes (puts her finger to her lips) (.) so for the song we are going to teach you about the  
words
- 9 Jenny: so first one is tiger (.)
- 10 Student 1: shows flashcard
- 11 Jenny: can you say tiger
- 12 Class: tiger
- 13 Jenny: tiger
- 14 Class: tiger
- 15 Jenny: alright you know what (.) what (.) how does a tiger make a sound↑
- 16 Class: (makes a roaring sound)
- 17 Jenny: great (.) ok just have like roar (row\*)
- 18 Class: roar (row\*) (.) roar (row\*)
- 19 Jenny: roar (row\*) say roar (row\*)
- 20 Class: roar (row\*)
- 21 Jenny: and what does it act like (.) act like what
- 22 Class: (makes a clawing gesture) (1.0)
- 23 Jenny: yeah:: like this (clawing gesture) roar (row\*)

After Jenny, Bank, Noon and Som have finished the song they sit down between their friends on the floor to participate in the teaching practice of the next group. The group of Jan is next. They have divided the instructions among the four group members and each take brief turns in giving instructions. After the first round of singing their song 'head, shoulders, knee and toes', Jan takes over to check their understanding of the vocabulary used in the song.

- 25 Jan: ok we check if you understand this vocabulary (1.0) what is this
- 26 Class: head

27 Jan: what is this  
28 Class: eyes  
29 Jan: what are this  
30 Class: knees  
31 Jan: what is this  
32 Class: mouth  
33 Jan: ok

After Jan finishes, one of her group mates takes over and sings the song with the students again. In the afternoon May is leading the peer teaching activity of her group in the parallel class. Her group is doing a song on prepositions and half way through the activity she introduces a new step in the song.

141 May: ok everyone this round we're going to sing a song together yes↑ and (2.0) and we must send a box to your friend together (*models passing the bowl from one to another*) (1.0) and then (1.0) at the end when we sing a song that where is the ladybug (2.0) who take the box (2.0) and this person must answer the question where is the ladybug (.) you must look at the staff that mean where they put the ladybug (.) for example (3.0) if you take the box (*hands box to student and starts singing*) on in under by on in under by on in under by where is the ladybug (*places the ladybug in the bowl*)

142 Class: in

143 May: YES

144 Class: (clap)

145 (4.0)

146 May: OK (.) are you understand (2.0) are you ready ONE TWO THREE

147 Class: (*pass around the bowl and sing*) on in under by (.) on in under by on in under by (.)  
where is the ladybug (.)

148 May: where is the ladybug↑

149 Class: IN

150 May: YES (.) ok one more

May and her group mates finish the activity shortly after this. They join the rest of the next group with and Tik gets ready to teach their activity. Instead of taking an existing song, they have written the song on their own. Tik takes a leading role in teaching this song. At the end of their teaching practice Tik rounds up the activity.

242 Tik: how did you feel about this song↑

243 Class: YES

244 Tik: can you sing it now↑

245 Class: yes

246 Tik: can you bring my song to sing in your bedroom

247 Class: NO:::

248 Tik: when you have free time (1.0) when you take a bath (acts out showering) you can {starts singing} nanananana (4.0) OK thank you everyone (2.0) see you

249 Class: (claps her hands) SEE YOU (2.0) BYE BYE:::

The excerpts in this vignette show several instances of literacy events in the classroom and the ways that student-teachers use English in these literacy events. These excerpts create insight into the English literacy practices of individual student-teachers when they are required to use English in the classroom and show the different ways they take advantage of this opportunity to use English in a context in which English is rarely used. The literacy practices of the student-teachers in the excerpts above illustrate well how some people like, Tik, May and Jenny take the opportunity to practice their English in the classroom whereas others like Jan do not make use of this. The classroom as a site of production then provides the affordance for English to be used and practiced, but only a few student-teachers make use of this affordance. A good example of a person who did not make full use of this

affordance was Am. She only used a minimal amount of English to provide instructions to her participating classmates. Her performance was a good reflection of the teaching performance of her group and how they managed to teach the activity by providing minimal instructions in English. More than half of the groups on the course managed to complete their peer-teaching in English in this way by only providing the minimally required instructions. In addition, they heavily relied on the prior knowledge of their classmates of the activities in order to make sense of the instructions. As a result, they understood even the most poorly communicated instructions by drawing on their shared knowledge of the learning activities used. However, other student-teachers seem to explore a wider range of functions and made use of the affordances that this classroom offered. The group of Jenny, Bank, Noon and Som, for instance, engaged in communicative interaction beyond providing the instructions only. Bank for example in lines 5-7 tries to build up a rapport with the students by asking them if they like singing and dancing, and, includes a phatic comment in line 7 “that’s good”. Som in line 8 uses discourse markers such as “and now” and “so now” which in the current context of giving instructions provide communicative clues for the participating students as to how the steps are sequenced. Jenny also uses a number of discourse markers and phatic comments such as in line 15 “alright “ and line 17 “great”, “ok” and “like” and line 23 “yeah::”. The pronunciation of Bank, Som, and Jenny during this activity included features of American English which stood out among the other students who still experience difficulties pronouncing certain sounds correctly and often feature a clearly distinct Thai pronunciation. This Thai pronunciation includes features such as omitting word final /-s/, word final /-l/ is realized as /n/ and word stress is often misplaced on the last syllable of the word.

The fact that this particular group makes better use of the affordances and explores a wider range of language features in the classroom as a site of production illustrates two points. First of all, it illustrates the individualized trajectories of English literacy practices the student-teachers engage in when participating in English literacy events in the classroom. Secondly, it shows that not all student-

teachers have what Kalman (2005) calls the modalities of appropriation, to actively participate and make use of these literacy events. This is clearly illustrated by the more colloquial use of English and the communicative strategies that some student-teachers engage in while others simply rely on memorized and practiced phrases. However, the fact that English literacy events are included as part of the teaching and learning that takes place in this particular classroom is important for the way in which this classroom as a social space and the English literacy practices that construct this space relate to the use of English in other social spaces . The English literacy practices that student-teachers engage in create meaningful links with other social spaces and allow this particular classroom to become part of a larger network of social spaces. This is contrary to the observations made in the Thai classroom where engaging in these English literacy practices was seen as transgressive. The importance of these links is illustrated in the comments made by the other student-teachers who point out that student-teachers like Bank, Som and Jenny all actively look for opportunities outside the classroom to use English such as chatting with foreigners online. It seems that they have developed the communicative skills and discourse practices by engaging in English literacy events outside the classroom and draw on these practices inside the classroom to engage in these English literacy events. It is important in this context to mention that digital technology allows student-teachers to gain access to these English literacy events. However, there are also students like May and Tik who are not regarded as part of the group of more proficient speakers in their year and do not chat with foreigners online, but who still try to make use of the opportunity to use English in the classroom. May for instance took a leading role in her teaching practice. She provided instructions for a particular stage of the activity and instead of explaining it just once, she expends the effort to go over her instructions again and model the instructions with the actions (line 141). Tik also took a leading role in her peer-teaching practice activity and tried to extend her performance beyond the level of only giving instructions when she rounded up

her activity. In lines 242-249 she ends the activity but keeps the floor a little longer than expected by asking in line 246 “can you bring my song to sing in your bedroom” and extending this in line 248 with:

“when you have free time (1.0) when you take a bath (acts out showering) you can (starts singing)nanananana (4.0) OK thank you everyone (2.0) see you”

Other groups did not extend the closing sections of their peer-teaching practice activities in the way Tik has done here. Although the examples here evidence only a relatively small amount of additional English language use during the activity, these moments are quite substantial and valid within the context of the current discourse on the use of English in the classroom and the actual amount of English spoken in the classroom. The current peer-teaching activities in the classroom provide for some students valuable opportunities to try out English for teaching purposes; an opportunity they rarely get within the current discourse on the use of English in the classroom. Student-teachers, however, seem to deal with these potential sites of English language production in different ways. Some student-teachers actively take the opportunity to explore different language features and extend rather formulaic parts of the activity, such as closing an activity, whereas other student-teachers approach this potential site of English language production in a different way. However, contrary to the observations made of English literacy events in the Thai classroom, the English literacy events in classrooms with foreign lecturers do make meaningful links with other social spaces by providing the opportunity to let student-teachers engage in English literacy practices. This makes this particular classroom as a social space a meaningful node in a nexus of relations.

6.5 Powerpoints, textbooks and videos: how semiotic artifacts make or break links between literacy events.

In addition to the literacy practices that make meaningful connections between the different spaces, the semiotic artifacts such as learning materials and other forms of literacy materials such as

assignments completed in class, notes taken in English and information in English that have been brought to the classroom by the student-teachers, also play a role in how well the English literacy practices and digital literacy practices relate to literacy events outside the classroom. In the previous chapter, I argued that material and semiotic artifacts also have the ability to create meaningful interactions and connections between processes taking place on different time scales and in different spaces through a process called heterochrony.

The classroom observations showed that the majority of the semiotic artifacts that students interact with, such as PowerPoint presentations, handouts, and instructions, are actually produced in Thai and the students have indicated that they have minimal interaction with these artifacts after they are used in the classroom. These handouts and PowerPoints, however, are important since they form the primary sources of information for students to interact with when studying for their final exams. Students-teachers, however, are not given the opportunity to use additional resources such as textbooks and only in a few situations have teachers provided online resources to supplement the learning materials. This creates a situation in which students have to rely on a small amount of resources such as handouts, printed PowerPoint presentations and their own notes to make meaningful connections between the shorter moments of instruction and activities in the classroom and the slower, longer process of developing an understanding of the entire body of knowledge and skills that a course aims to develop. In other words, the only material and semiotic artifacts that can create the affordance of heterochrony are limited in availability and produced in Thai.

The absence of English learning materials further adds to the argument I made in earlier in this chapter that the interaction with English literacy events on the courses with Thai lecturers is limited and that a lack of these English literacy practices makes it difficult for them to make meaningful connections to English literacy events outside the classroom. This is important since student-teachers indicated that they often search for course related information online outside the classroom and that this often

happens in English. During the focus group interviews the quality and availability of learning materials emerged as a theme and student-teachers indicated that they experienced problems in putting these artifacts to effective use in their learning practices. The following excerpt is taken from a focus group interview in which we discussed the semiotic artifacts they interacted with in the classroom. Prior to this excerpt I indicated that I was surprised that they were not given any textbooks during the course and one of the student-teachers, Noi, replied as follows.

Excerpt 13: Transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

594 Noi:           they scare of us if they give textbook to us (.) we don't read textbook (.) so they don't  
                          give textbook for us

595 Int:           that you won't read it (.) but would you read it if they give it you

596 Noi:           {TH: the teacher said that we won't read the books}

597 Int:           is that true or not

598 An:           I think it is true but mmh::

599 (2.0)

600 Tik:           when we will have final exam we actually read it

601 Noi:           yeah

602 May, Cherry:   (nod)

603 An:           I think that er::

604 (1.0)

605 Noi:           but if you have a worksheet it easy lost (.) but if we have a textbook it's easy to read

606 An:           I lost it so many time but (2.0)

607 Int:           right right (.) so the exams are based on the powerpoints the handouts and what the

teacher explains in the class and your notes but how do you go back if you have to prepare for an exam (.) do you go online to find extra information or to check (.) like do you suppose that you get a powerpoint and there is information on there do you check it online to find out more to check if it right or wrong (.) do you search for extra information

608 All: yes yes

609 An: yes but sometimes in the internet not have (.) you know (.) sometimes I need to know something but in the final not have (.) {TH: about the cocktail party it didn't have any right}

610 Tik: oh yeah (2.0) some information the teacher give us we cannot find on the internet (1.0) so we so confused

611 Int: can you give an example of that

612 Tik: like

613 (3.0)

614 Tik: about the cocktail party

615 (1.0)

616 Noi: like how to run a cocktail party

617 An: do you know cocktail party in the classroom

618 May: cocktail party is an activity {TH: about finding the activity right} (2.0) I want to know about cocktail party activity I search on the internet but I don't have

619 An: there is no result

620 May: on the internet it don't have

This excerpt illustrates the discrepancy between the learning materials they are provided in the classroom and the learning materials they prefer to interact with outside the classroom. The accounts of the student-teachers in this excerpt suggest that the learning materials they are provided with in the classroom insufficiently support their learning practices. Student-teachers claim that they are not provided with the actual textbooks since their lecturers believe that they do not read the books and texts. Although the students-teachers indicate they might not read them right away, textbooks do form an important source of information for their exams (line 600). Noi and An also point out in lines 605 – 606 that worksheets and printouts of PowerPoints often get lost. In order to bridge the gap between the required level of understanding on a test and the amount of information that is provided by the handouts, student-teachers often use the internet as an additional resource (609 – 610).

However, their efforts in finding supplementary resources outside the classroom depend on how well the semiotic artifacts in the classroom interact with sources of information outside the classroom. In the excerpt student -teachers provided an example in which the explanation of the lecturer was insufficient for the student-teachers to understand the function of a ‘cocktail party’ activity for language learning. In this particular case the information was provided in Thai and insufficient to create a good understanding of the activity, which was going to be on a test. Student-teachers tried to find additional information online, but based on the information given on the handouts and the explanation of the lecturer they were unable to find any information online. In other words, the semiotic artifacts that were used in the classroom did not only fail to communicate a clear understanding of the concept, they also failed to make a meaningful connection with literacy events outside the classroom that would allow student-teachers to develop a better understanding of this activity. The fact that May in lines 618 – 620 says “on the internet it don’t have” is a clear indication that not only the semiotic artifacts are insufficient learning resources for the students, but also that the student-teachers’ cannot

develop an understanding of this concept through their self-directed learning practices. An summarizes the consequence of this a few moments later by saying:

632: An:            {TH: yes because when we have to take the exam I can't do it} (1.0) I lose the point  
                          because I can't search it in the internet

This example shows that the semiotic artifacts that are used in the classroom do not form effective tools to make meaningful connections with learning and literacy events outside the classroom. This lack of interaction prevents ideas and knowledge captured in these materials from interacting with processes that function on longer time scales such as a good understanding that spans beyond the duration of the course and the possibility to use it as an activity in the classroom in the future.

#### 6.6 Student-teachers' selective foregrounding and backgrounding of English literacy practices as a strategy to participate in the practices of the relevant social space

The vignettes presented above show how the English language practices that student-teachers engage in are mediated by different discourses in place, different interaction orders, and, the different historical bodies they bring to these sites of engagement. For instance, when Jenny, Som, and Bank have to do a presentation with one of the Thai teachers in vignettes one and two they bring a considerable amount of communicative English language experience to this site of engagement. However, the discourses in place still require them to use Thai in the classroom, interact with Thai semiotic artifacts and present a topic about English language teaching in Thai instead of English. This means that the historical bodies of the student-teachers are incommensurate with the nexus of practice of teaching in the Thai classroom. As a result, the student-teachers are limited in the number of opportunities to engage in meaningful English literacy practices since they are forced to suppress or background those English literacy practices they would like to foreground. Vignette three, however, illustrates how

different discourses in place can change the classroom, and instead of being a transgressive practice, the use of English has now become a foregrounded practice that is both an essential tool to engage in the practice of peer-teaching and of influence on their course assessment. What these vignettes illustrate is that within the same institution and physical environment, sites of engagement occurring as literacy events do not construct the same social space of 'a classroom'. Different learning and literacy practices intersect at these sites of engagement and these practices are mediated by different discourses in place, the different historical bodies both student-teachers and teachers bring to these sites of engagement, and a different interaction order. As a result, English literacy practices can be a foregrounded practice at the intersection of practices at one site of engagement and backgrounded or absent at another. This has important implications for how student-teachers learn and develop English literacy skills since engaging in these English literacy practices in the classroom allows them to make meaningful links to other spaces.

The data in this study suggest that the varying discourses on the use of technology and English in the classroom create smaller individual networks of connected spaces instead of one larger integrated network. Since these different discourses and practices construct different social spaces in which student-teacher learn, they constantly have to adapt to the practices and discourses that are normative for that particular teacher and course by suppressing or backgrounding those practices and discourses in their historical bodies that are incommensurate with their historical bodies. In addition, these highly contextualized and individualized learning spaces prevent the formation of a larger more integrated nexus of relations between the courses that students take. In the case of the development of English literacy practices, this confines the use of English in the classroom to language courses in which English is the sole purpose of teaching and learning and further limits student-teachers' exposure to English in a learning environment in which these opportunities are already scarce. In addition, strictly separating the

use of English from content learning prevents student-teachers from developing the situated literacies such as classroom English, which will be relevant to their future professional practices.

The restrictions placed on the use of digital technology has similar implications for student-teachers' literacy practices. Throughout the study it was observed that the literacy practices that student-teachers engage in are an integrated part of their digital practices. The previous chapter illustrated how the digital practices and non-digital practices are integrated and form meaningful extensions of each other. However, in the classroom student-teachers are prevented from drawing on those tools and digital practices that they make use of so frequently outside the classroom as part of their more informal learning practices. This separates the literacy practices in the classroom from the learning activities that extend beyond the classroom such as preparing for presentations, doing homework, studying for exams and so forth. In some cases, such as the video assignment described in chapter 5, course assignments require the use of digital technology outside the classroom. However, these learning activities fail to create meaningful trajectories of those digital practices outside the classroom that are required to fulfill the homework task and the moments at which these learning practices converge in the classroom that enable these learning activities to take place. This inability of learning activities in the classroom to make meaningful links with other spaces in which student-teachers engage in literacy practices has also been observed with the semiotic artifacts that student-teachers interact with as part of their course material.

## 6.7 Conclusion

The current chapter has argued that the ability of the learning and teaching practices of the student-teachers in the classroom to form meaningful connections with practices in moments of actions in other social spaces is highly dependent on the lecturer, the course materials and student-teachers own digital literacy skills. The observations made in the classroom suggest that the ways student-

teachers engage in learning and literacy practices in the classroom is different from how they engage in similar practices outside the classroom. The restrictions placed on the use of English in classrooms with Thai teachers prevent the student-teachers from making meaningful connections between the English literacy practices they engage in on other courses with for instance foreign lecturers, and, in literacy events outside the classroom. Similarly, the restrictions placed on the use of technology in the classroom prevent student-teachers from drawing on those skills and strategies that they normally engage with in literacy events outside the classroom. Lastly, the learning materials the student-teachers are provided with in the classroom do not form effective tools that allow student-teachers to engage in literacy and learning practices that make meaningful connections with literacy events outside the classroom. From a theoretical perspective the findings in this chapter suggest that the literacy practices and the digital tools that converge at sites of engagement in the classroom with Thai lecturers are mediated by discourses that do not form meaningful links with literacy practices converging at other sites of engagement outside the classroom. The literacy practices observed in the classroom with the foreign teachers do seem to support this formation of links between literacy events outside the classroom. As a result, where the literacy events in the classrooms with foreign teachers do seem to form a meaningful node in a larger nexus of relations which spans beyond the classroom, the literacy events taking place in the Thai classroom seems to be confined to the literacy events taking place in the classroom. The next chapter explores what these digital literacy practices are that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom and how these out-of-class digital literacy practices are related to the practices inside the classroom.

## **Chapter 7: Learning, English literacy and digital tools outside the classroom in provincial Thailand**

### 7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed how student-teachers of English engage in a variety of literacy practices inside the classroom and how the classroom as a social space is constructed at the intersection of these practices. I problematized how the discourses in place on the use of English inside the classroom and the use of digital technology have a strong influence on how both lecturers and student-teachers engage in English literacy practices in the classroom. Lecturers foreground or background different requirements on the use of English as part of their in-class teaching practices. In addition, lecturers have different approaches and rules on the use of digital technology to engage in these in-class literacy practices. The way in which lecturers foreground or background certain practices, and the use of digital tools to engage in these practices, subsequently influences which practices intersect at sites of engagement in the classroom as a social space. This has further consequences for the way in which these practices link to other social spaces and the practices intersecting in those spaces in a larger eco-social network of learning and literacy.

In this chapter, I trace the trajectories of these literacy practices and the tools used to engage in them beyond the classroom. I discuss how these practices are mediated by different discourses in place and intersect with other practices when they construct social spaces outside the physical classroom. The chapter starts by tracing the practices and discourses of in-class English literacy events outside the classroom. It will then identify the English literacy practices that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom which have a direct relationship to English literacy events inside the classroom. It will then move on to discuss how digital technology creates affordances and constraints for developing more autonomous English literacy practices outside the classroom and how digital tools assist student-teachers to navigate routes of access to engage in these literacy events.

## 7.2 Outside the classroom 'is more real': Tracing student-teachers' English literacy practices outside the classroom

The previous chapter identified the classroom as an important site of English language production and showed how in classes with foreign lecturers, the use of English was foregrounded by a strong discourse that required the use of English in these literacy events, while with Thai lecturers the use of English was backgrounded, though it still played an important role in student-teachers' practices in coping with the lesson. I will start here with a description of how the student-teachers view the differences in using English inside the classroom and outside the classroom before showing examples of how these practices result in literacy events outside the classroom when these English literacy practices are foregrounded in the classroom.

Student-teachers indicated that the necessity to use English in the classroom prompts them to anticipate and prepare for these events outside the classroom. The opportunity to prepare for English literacy events in the classroom allows student-teachers to anticipate particular literacy events and practice the English language functions and vocabulary needed to successfully engage in these practices. This provides student-teachers with a degree of confidence since the majority of these practices are routines opposed to relatively unplanned literacy events they might engage in outside the classroom. The student-teachers mentioned the focus group interviews and foreigners asking for directions as examples of unplanned literacy events they might find themselves engaged in. Although engaging in these ad hoc literacy events outside the classroom was seen as potentially more demanding, student-teachers did indicate that they prefer such opportunities since it helps them to develop their communicative skills. However, student-teachers mentioned that the experience they have gained from engaging in a literacy event inside the classroom was rarely directly applicable to these events outside the classroom. In the following excerpt I asked student-teachers to elaborate on what the differences are in using English inside and outside the classroom.

Excerpt 14. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 411 Tik: both
- 412 Noi: I think outside the classroom is better than in the classroom
- 413 Cherry: is more real
- 414 Bom: yeah it's better
- 415 Noi: for example we study grammar (.) outside the classroom we needn't use it
- 416 (2.0)
- 417 Tik: I think both are good
- 418 Noi: {TH: but we don't use it often}
- 419 Tik: {TH: what do you use↑}
- 420 Noi: {TH: inaudible mumble}
- 421 Tik: at least we know more vocabulary (1.0) {TH: because we have to use it}
- 422 Noi: {TH: but outside the classroom we can practice more English (.) it's like a } real situation
- 423 Cherry: real world

The discussion in this excerpt shows that despite the disagreement between the students on the effectiveness of the different opportunities and learning practices they engage in, they clearly differentiate between the English literacy practices inside the classroom and the more real world communicative practices they engage in, albeit rarely, outside the classroom. This disagreement between student-teachers on their learning and literacy practices, however, also shows the individual learning trajectories student-teachers engage in and how they evaluate these English literacy events differently. These different evaluations of the learning potential of English literacy events also surfaced as themes in other focus group interviews. The student-teachers in excerpt 12 were not able to indicate exactly what they meant by “more real” when they referred to their out-of-class English literacy

practices. However, another group was able to provide more insight into how their in-class and out-of-class English literacy practices differed. In the following excerpt they describe how they feel that the use of English in the classroom needs to be grammatically correct and how this contrasts with their use of English outside the classroom.

Excerpt 15. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 292 Toey: {TH: here and there↑ it is} different or same
- 293 June: diff[erent ]
- 294 Toey: [different]
- 295 Int: ok (.) how would you say (.) when you're using English in the classroom how do you feel
- 296 Nu: in the classroom
- 297 June: very hard
- 298 (2.0)
- 299 Int: very hard (.) why↑
- 300 June: {TH: we have to learn} (makes a gesture of something ongoing)
- 301 Nu: {TH: grammar yes yes}
- 302 June: we must use [(1.0) grammar (.) ] ehm
- 303 Nu: [ use grammar ]
- 304 (1.0)
- 305 Int: correctly↑
- 306 June: yeah (.) and everything (.) must be use perfect
- 307 Int: mmhh mmhh
- 308 Toey: {TH: JUNE (.) SPEAK LOUDER}

309 June: {TH: now} just now I want to talk about I just want to talk not care about grammar  
[(laughs)] or word or everything

310 Nu: [(laugh)]

Toey: [(laugh) ]

This excerpt shows how the use of English in the classroom is perceived to be very hard (line 297) since they feel they “must use grammar” (line 302) whereas this is different outside the classroom. The strong focus on form and correct grammar use (line 306) sharply contrasts with June’s description of her use of English outside of the classroom in line 309: the fact that she “just want [sic] to talk not care about grammar or word or everything”. This relatively relaxed attitude toward using English outside the classroom is further evidenced in their frequent code switching in which a large number of sentences start in Thai and are finished in English.

In addition to this difference in focus on form and focus on meaning, another group differentiated between the actual English literacy events in the various social spaces and the various English literacy practices that cycle through these literacy events. They also emphasize how these literacy events inside the classroom and outside the classroom are perceived by other people.

Excerpt 16. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

267 Jenny: when speak inside the classroom we I think [ (1.0) ]it’s about learning about  
study (.) is ok (1.0) but speak outside just normal situation when normal (.) we used to  
try before in a group (.) and how people look at us is like (1.0) weird

268 Tian: [about learn]

269 Int: right

270 Jenny: {TH: like this group is showing off}

271 All: (nod and laugh)

272 Int: but do you care about that (.) what other people think about that  
273 Jenny: no nah not really but it's just annoying (.) they are annoying  
274 Bank: (laugh)  
Noon: (laugh)  
275 Noon: he he he (.) they don't know about what we say  
276 Jenny: probably they just think that {TH: just like (1.0) what are they talking about}  
277 Noon: {TH: like what language↑}  
278 Jenny: {TH: I don't care about it}

The participants here explain that the use of English inside the classroom is mostly related to learning whereas outside the classroom it is “just normal situation” (line 267). This indicates that, despite the learning potential of using English in the classroom, which the student- teachers identified in chapter 6, this type of English literacy practices are not necessarily seen as normative ways of using English. This contrasts with their more autonomous practices of using of English outside the classroom such as described in the excerpt above.

As already pointed out in the previous chapter, the group of Jenny, Som, Noon and Bank are considered by other participants to be more proficient and confident in their use of English. Several times they indicated that they try to use English outside the classroom as well to talk to each other in order to practice their English. Jenny indicates that she feels that this form of practice is seen by others as a transgressive practice, “people look at us is like (1.0) weird” (line 267), or at least something that is considered to be out of the ordinary, “{TH: like this group is showing off}” (line 270). In the previous chapter, it became clear that different discourses mediate these English literacy practices inside the classroom to the extent that in some cases, the use of English has become a transgressive practice, or at least not normative for that particular social space. The negative evaluation of the participants’ use of

English by other people creates a similar impression. It seems that, although the use of English is normative for the participants, or as they call it 'just normal', different discourses in place on the use of English outside the classroom are foregrounded by other students at the university, resulting in this practice being seen as something out of the ordinary. However, the fact that others might see this as a transgressive practice leaves these participants, who are generally more confident in their English language use, relatively unaffected as they indicated later on (lines 273, 277-278). They even exhibit a sense of pride that they are trying to use English outside the classroom and that people who have an opinion about this are just "annoying" (line 273-275).

The excerpts above describe a language learning context of the student-teachers in which face-to-face communicative English literacy events outside the classroom are scarce and seen by the participants as different from the literacy events they engage in in-class. In addition, these literacy practices are mediated by specific discourses in place which in some sites of engagement make the use of English a transgressive literacy practice. The next section discusses out of class literacy events that are related to preparing for these in-class literacy events, focusing on the tools the student-teachers use, and the semiotic artifacts that cycle through these sites of engagement.

### 7.3 English literacy events outside the classroom: Student-teachers preparing English for in-class use

Preparing for English language literacy events in the classroom is an important part of students-teachers' interaction with the English language outside the classroom. There are various ways in which language use is prepared for and practiced outside the class as well as different reasons for doing this. The most common example is when students have to complete assignments as part of their homework. In this case the task, such as a fill in the blank exercise is completed outside the class and the semiotic artifact, the completed assignment on paper, is brought into classroom. This artifact may be used as tool to mediate an activity in the classroom such as checking answers, or it may be handed in for assessment,

or both. Both activities function on a relatively short time scale and the practice of doing homework intersects with English literacy practices in this particular literacy event. In most cases, the answers filled in are resemiotizations of their understanding of the text, possibly instructions and explanations of language features taught in class, or from texts other sources such as information found on websites, from PowerPoint presentations or textbooks. The filled in task-sheet in itself then is resemiotized again in the classroom as part of the textual mediation of a learning activity. In this example the language is relatively formulaic and with a clear focus on form rather than meaning. However, both the English literacy practices and the semiotic artifact cycle through both the classroom and social spaces outside the classroom. It is a matter of debate though what the potential is of this discourse to sustain its trajectory in the future and to be resemiotized or mediate other actions or practices.

Another type of out-of-class English literacy event that was observed related to preparation that student-teachers engage in is the preparation of materials that are used for peer teaching on several methodology courses they were taking during the semester of observation.

**Figure 6 still image taken from a wearable camera during a homework activity.**

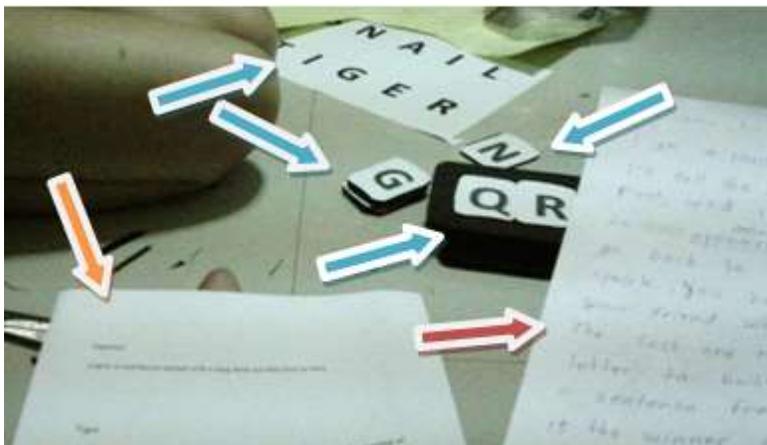


Figure 6 above shows an example of the English literacy events and semiotic artifacts that are produced as a result of engaging in this practice. The example here is taken from the reading and spelling activity that the student-teachers prepared for a teaching practice activity as described in the vignette 1 in chapter 4. In brief, the activity involved one person reading out a description of an animal which the listeners then had to spell with a Scrabble like game. On the right side of the picture (indicated with the red arrow) is the script with the instructions that student-teachers have written out in full. Student-teachers indicated that writing out the language of instruction in a script for this particular activity and practicing this script is an important English literacy event. The following excerpt describes how student-teachers go about formulating the instructions and the type of instructions they provide.

Excerpt 17. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

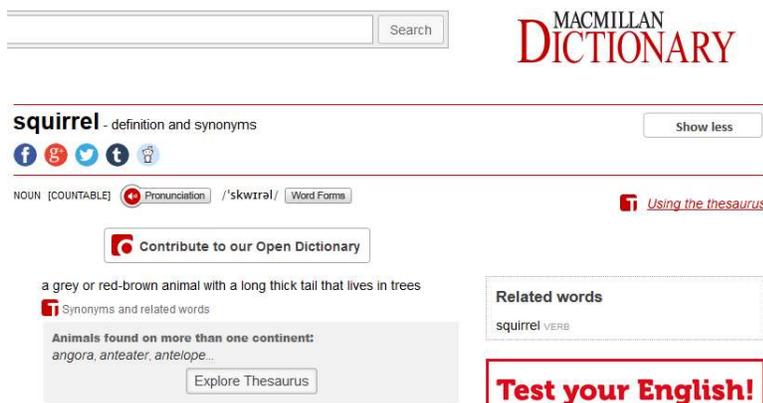
- 78 Tik: it's about activity and then (.) think of the word (.) and then we choose what we have to explain to them (.) {TH: Ajarn S is not focusing on grammar right↑}
- 79 An: {TH: no} she not stick grammar (.) no grammar
- 80 Int: yeah yeah
- 81 Tik: she want to see that how
- 82 An: she want to see slowly (1.0) slowly
- 83 Tik: clearly
- 84 An: just be clear not difficult (.)
- 85 Int: ok (.) and to to practice like to prepare (.) did you practice outside the classroom (.) did you practice like with giving instructions
- 86 Tik: yes
- 87 Int: yeah what did you do (.) how did you practice
- 88 (3.0)

89 An:           for example my friend I give her (.) some a little bit word to talk when she go (.) to  
English camp because she has to be a leader of this game that you saw yesterday (.) and  
then I will write for her and she practice to speak and let me listen yeah (.) and I will tell  
her that (.) it's ok ↑↓

This excerpt shows how the student-teachers prepare for the instructional language through a step-by-step selection of the activity, the vocabulary needed for this particular activity, and the particular steps and actions that they need to explain it to the students (line 78). In addition, it shows how student-teachers anticipate the type of instructional language that the lecturer wants to see in their peer-teaching performance. Contrary to the strong discourse on the requirement to use grammatically correct English in the classroom described earlier in this chapter, the foreign lecturer, Ajarn S, does not foreground a focus on form as strongly as her Thai colleagues do. Instead, she requires student-teachers to “just be clear [sic] not difficult” (line 84). From the classroom observations of their peer-teaching practice, it became clear that this meant that their grades would not be affected if they made minor, non-impeding, grammatical mistakes. The main focus for the assessment of instructional language was placed on clarity and intelligibility and how well the student-teachers were able to convey clear instructions in English rather than in Thai. The process of practicing the instructional language to be used in class was not an individual activity, but instead done as a collaborative activity in which they peer reviewed and formulated the language they intend to use to give instructions during their teaching practice.

In addition to the language of instruction, figure 6 also shows the target language used in a spelling activity they designed for their peer teaching practice. In the center and on the top of the picture (indicated with the blue arrows), the Scrabble letter tiles of a spelling activity can be seen. In the left bottom corner (indicated with an orange arrow) are the questions that function as prompts for the activity. The description reads “a grey or red-brown animal with a long thick tail that lives in trees” and the answer is “a squirrel”. The reading prompts are not originally produced by the student-teachers, but are the result of a Google search they carried out. The search led the students to the website of

**Figure 7** Screen shot taken from MacMillan’s online dictionary



MacMillan’s online dictionary (figure 7)

where a range of different definitions or descriptions of animals can be found.

The definitions of the other animals

such as a tiger, a snail and, a tortoise

were also taken from there. In other

words, the definitions used for the

spelling activity were re-entextualized from the MacMillan online dictionary and used the next day as tools to mediate a peer teaching practice activity in the classroom. During the follow up focus group interview the use of online dictionaries and online resources turned out to be an important theme in student-teachers’ out-of-class learning practices, and this specific application came at the suggestion of a lecturer. The student-teachers describe their use of the internet and online resource in the excerpt of a focus group interview below.

Excerpt 18. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

470 May: sometimes I want to know about anything I search for answer in the internet (.) I always search for content about {TH: the things we will learn about}

471 An: what you will learn about in the future

- 472 Int: ok what you learn about in the future
- 473 May: when I have a homework I usually search in the internet
- 474 Int: yeah ok so the internet is helping you in understanding it better (.) and ehm: do your teachers (.) do they help you in like finding things online (.) do they suggest websites to you or (.) do they suggest like maybe you should look here or there
- 475 An: yes D (.) Ajarn D she suggest me err::
- 476 Tik: to find new vocabulary meaning in English
- 477 An: English to English
- 478 Tik: is is (.) ehm macmillan dictionary
- 479 Int: ok yeah that's a good one
- 480 Tik: yes I think it's good it give (.) a lot of information (2.0) and phonetic (.) how to pronounce
- 481 Int: and do you have an application for that  
(2.0)
- 482 Tik: {do we have that}
- 483 An: yes

In this excerpt the student-teachers indicate two important points. First of all that the internet is an important tool that mediates their learning practices, and, that the lecturer's orientation toward the use of technology in learning and teaching can play an instrumental role in students' digitally mediated learning practices outside the classroom. In the previous chapter it became clear that a strong discourse from certain lecturers restricted the use of technology in the classroom. However, here students

indicate that at the specific suggestion of one particular lecturer, Ajarn D<sup>6</sup>, they started using certain applications and websites as tools to mediate their out of class literacy practices. As the excerpt below shows, Ajarn D promotes the use of technology in the classroom and beyond and produces a different discourse on the use of technology in learning and teaching.

Excerpt 19. A transcript from a research interview with a lecturer

161 DN: I (.) I the course that I (.) the course last semester for B.Ed students was classroom management (.) I introduced them some resources about teaching (.) like you can find this and it's available online and for example if you would like to prepare the activity or the task and you are short of ideas you can use Google and try to find things like ready-made worksheet activities and then like er:: even introduce the online dictionary Macmillan or Longman like you are the teacher and it is very important for you to pronounce EVery word correctly (.) with the stress and the vowel and consonant so if you don't know don't guess (.) better make sure by going to this website and check whether you pronounce the word correctly (.) so I introduce all these resources to them

The excerpt above shows a different discourse on the use of technology. Where the other lecturers interviewed denigrated student-teachers' digital literacy skills and referred to the student-teachers as "kids", Ajarn D emphasizes a clear role and function of digital technology in language learning and formulates the importance of developing these skills within the context of becoming a teacher. Interestingly, Ajarn D was the only lecturer mentioned by name by the participants. These suggestions made by Ajarn D did not only surface in the theme of doing homework or preparing for English literacy events in the classroom but also when the student-teachers went to a local school to do

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<sup>6</sup> Ajarn D is also my patron in the current research. I have not mentioned our relationship to the student-teachers. None of the student-teachers were aware that I knew Ajarn D over the course of the interviews.

a one week teaching practice. In the following excerpt, Noon was interviewed at her school during a week of teaching practice toward the end of the semester. She indicated (line 171) that during her teaching practice she often quickly used the internet to help her find materials and language samples for use in English literacy events in her own classroom where she is the teacher.

Excerpt 20. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

169: Noon: internet for the rapidly (.) rapidly time

170: Int: ok so quickly look something up

171: Noon: quickly such as (.) find eh worksheet from the internet for some class or I finding a picture (.) a picture or an example sentence dialogue for (.) to teaching

Noon indicated later during the school visit that the suggestions to look up worksheets, language samples and other materials came from the course that Ajarn D had taught the previous semester. In addition to the positive discourse that Ajarn D engages in and how it affects student-teachers, this excerpt also provides an example of how digital technology is used in various spaces as a tool to engage in English literacy practices. Digital technology provides access to English language samples, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic knowledge about the language, and its information about its application in teaching and learning.

These excerpts show that digital technology creates important affordances for the participants when they prepare for in-class English literacy events in a resource-low English language acquisition environment. The digital practices that participants engage in when they prepare for language performances inside the classroom create important connections between these different social spaces. The artifacts that are produced as a result of engaging in these digital learning practices, such as a worksheet, a translation, instructional language or the input of a spelling activity, are mediating English literacy events inside the classroom. In the example above, Ajarn D's suggestions and positive

orientation toward the potential of digital technology as a resource for learning outside the classroom positively influences this connection between these different spaces. This contrasts with the predominantly negative discourse on the use of digital technology by the other lecturers.

#### 7.4 YouTube, movies and the Internet: the learning potential of digital English literacy events of student-teachers outside the classroom

The examples above have described a number of practices in which technology allows student-teachers to interact with English language samples or knowledge about the English language that facilitates their preparation for in-class English literacy events. All of these practices were done intentionally and with a clear purpose. However, in addition to these practices, student-teachers' also use digital technology to engage in literacy practices in which interaction with English or exposure to English is not always intentional and does not always serve a clear learning purpose. As Leander and Boldt (2013) argued, people do not always engage in literacy events with a particular goal or a clear purpose in mind, although engaging in these literacy events can still have a positive effect on the development of their literacy practices. Several digital English literacy events outside the classroom were observed in which exposure to English had a positive effect on the use of English in-class. Below I describe the effect this unintentional exposure to English has on student-teachers' in-class English performances through examining a classroom activity in which they acted out a skit for the course "Drama for English Language Learning".

##### Vignette 5: A learning activity in an English class with a foreign lecturer

It is Tuesday morning week three of the semester and students have to perform short skits for their course on Drama in English language learning. The first performance swiftly starts with the lecturer announcing the names of the group members. Jenny and Jan are in this group and the theme of the skit

is 'being caught underage drinking'. The skit is acted out in front of the classroom and students use their smart phones as props to act out scenes, such as taking selfies or pictures of food while having dinner, or to create special effects such as background music in a bar. Most students have taken up roles with fluency demands that seem to match their English language abilities. One of the students, Jenny, takes up quite a vocal role as the mother of a rather timid daughter, Jan, who is caught underage drinking in a local bar. In her role, Jenny does not only vent her anger at her 'daughter' but also gives the 'owner' of the club, played by another student, a hard time. She uses phrases such as 'what the hell', 'you can say that again', and, 'oh damned' and performs her role fluently with a strong American accent. Some other students are using similar phrases in skits on the same theme. Jan's role as a daughter requires little English besides some small talk with her friends and apologizing to her mother. The roles acted out in the skit evidence typical Thai cultural precepts reflected in socio communicative behavior normative for Thailand. The mother-daughter relationship acted out shows typical Thai cultural relationships as well as the 'wai' the daughter uses to apologize for her behavior. During the performance Bank is preparing for his role. He puts a flower behind his ear for his role as the daughter and takes a selfie to see how it looks. He later records a SnapChat with the flower behind his ear and sends it to a friend.

In the vignette above, student-teachers evidence an interesting use of stock phrases in their drama performances. Expressions such as 'what the hell', 'you can say that again', 'oh my god', 'you gotta be kidding me right?' and other fixed expressions were used by several of the groups. These types of phrases go beyond the exposure to English that they might have received as part of their instructional materials and reflect a type of exposure that is of a more communicative nature. During the follow up focus group interviews the student-teachers indicated that they were phrases they picked up from watching American sitcoms, English language movies and came across on the internet. The group of Jenny, Jan, Noon and Bank explained their use and interest in these forms of media in the excerpt

below. In this excerpt, I shared my observations of their use of English in the skits and asked how they decided to include the stock phrases in the skit.

Excerpt 21. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 313 Jenny: {TH: comes from imagination}
- 314 Noon: imagine or compare
- 315 Jenny: {TH: something like we think in Thai} and translate in English
- 316 Noon: {TH: like we compare which words are the closest
- 317 Jenny: and we watch a lot of movies to take some (.) some
- 318 Noon: subtitle
- 319 Jenny: YEAH (.) or what do you say in English (spells) Q U O T E
- 320 INT: quote
- 321 Jenny: yeah yeah we take it
- 322 INT: ok (.) which movies did you use for that
- 323 Jenny: ehm American series
- 324 Bank, Noon: (start getting excited and yell)
- 325 Noon: have good (.) sweet word and curse

In this excerpt Noon and Jenny indicate that movies and American television series, mostly accessed through YouTube, are good resources for phrases. Digital technology in the form of smart phones, the internet, and, social media platforms such as YouTube and Facebook where these videos are often shared, provides the student-teachers with tools to be exposed to this English language input relatively free of time and space constraints. What this illustrates is that the digital English literacy practices that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom is not limited to one particular space, but that these practices also extend beyond these social spaces. This exposure to English outside the

classroom also materializes into actual language use inside the classroom which is contrary to the perception of the lecturers that student-teachers' digital practices have little application to their academic studies. Noon, Bank and Jenny, but also other student-teachers, indicated that they are not actively searching for these sitcoms or movies in order to improve their English, but that it is a balance between engaging in these digital literacy events as leisure activities and learning from them as the occasion arises. The student-teachers make use of these moments of incidental learning at a later point in time in which they re-entextualize the samples of English they have been exposed to in their scripts for the drama skits. As mentioned in chapter 6, the classroom forms an important site of English language production and these in-class drama skit performances are important English literacy events.

From the vignette it becomes clear that these language samples are not simply copied and used arbitrarily in their performances, but instead creatively remixed and re-entextualized to match their English language abilities, their imagination, and the communicative context in which these language samples are used. The language samples are adapted to a communicative context that exhibits social interactions which are normative for their own social-cultural practices instead of copying a whole dialogue or set of phrases which are still embedded in the original cultural context of the movie or episode. These recontextualized language samples mediate various actions at sites of engagements across different social spaces. In contrast to the thematic network of social spaces described in chapter 6 in which English was clearly associated with learning events, the participants' English literacy practices outside the classroom link social spaces and actions that are associated with both learning events and social events such as chatting with a friend in English online. Engaging in these practices subsequently produces semiotic artifacts and texts that do not only mediate sites of engagement outside the classroom used for leisure activities, but also mediate sites of engagement inside the classroom. These semiotic artifacts thus afford heterochrony and strengthen links between the social spaces through which these English literacy practices cycle.

However, as mentioned in chapter 6, the levels of engagement of individual students in these digital English literacy practices should not be generalized across all participants. Some of them have particular individual preferences for various types of social media, movies, and affinity spaces and they have individual interests that they will pursue in these affinity spaces. Some student-teachers are interested in sitcoms whereas others are interested in cooking, writing novels, reading comics, manga, or chatting with other people online in mixed international forums. In the following section student-teachers' Facebook posts are used as a lens to provide insight into their individual digital English literacy practices.

#### 7.5 Student-teachers' English literacy practices: the example of Facebook posts

The digital practices described above such as watching sitcoms and movies in English are part of a larger network of connected activities and digitally mediated practices that involve interaction with or exposure to English. However, exposure to English is not the primary focus of engaging in these practices or actions, but rather a tool that allows student-teachers for instance to watch a sitcom in English, read a twitter feed, or make sense out of an instructional YouTube video. The following section will elaborate on these digitally mediated English literacy events and the tools that are used to engage in these practices.

Throughout the course of the semester it became clear that the student-teachers also engaged in a number of digital English literacy practices which did not have a direct application to classroom activities. These practices were not instantly identified or discussed during focus group interviews since the student-teachers were not always aware of the exposure to English or the active use of English in these literacy events. Through observations, visual tracking and interviews, these practices were made salient and discussed with the student-teachers to identify the practices and their relationship with other practices. The most frequently observed and mentioned digital practices involving English were

watching English movies, listening to music in English or singing songs in English, visiting websites in English or participating in affinity spaces online in English, reading, posting or commenting in English on social media and chatting with other L1 or L2 speakers of English. Student-teachers, however, showed varying levels of participation in these digital practices, citing different reasons for engaging in or refraining from them. As a result, while using the same tools, student-teachers engaged in different individual trajectories of literacy practices, interacting with different semiotic artifacts and linking different social spaces. These individualized trajectories of digital English literacy practices and the tools that they use demonstrate how these literacy events are essentially situated literacy practices (Gee, 2008; Scollon, 2001), and mediated by the different historical bodies of practices and the use of tools that actors bring to these sites of engagement. In addition, these varying levels of English literacy skills and digital literacy skills resulted in student-teachers navigating what Kalman (2005) calls different routes to access literacy events.

In order to illustrate these different digital practices and the role English literacy events play in these practices, the Facebook status updates of four student-teachers are used to map the intersecting practices at these sites of engagement. The first status update in figure 8 is a short post in which a student-teacher informs her Facebook friends about how she feels.

Figure 8 Facebook status update of a student-teacher



During a focus group interview the student-teacher elaborated on her Facebook post and explained that her post was in English because:

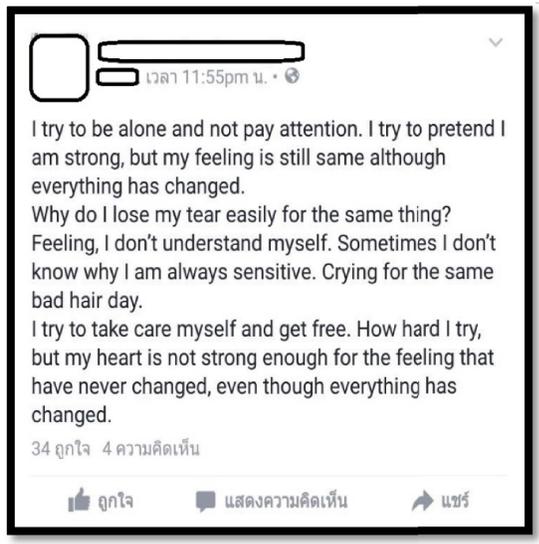
“I like (.) I like to post in English (.) when I feel something (.) but I don’t want someone to know what I post (.) ehm (.) someone (.) someone don’t know what I post (.) and they ask me what I post (.) and I (.) when when I post it (.) when I post it (.) many (.) many {TH: how shall I say this (.) people don’t know (.) and they want to know (.) like why do you post in English (.) what’s going on (.) yeah like that}”

(Quote focus group 4 group A 17/11/2015 line 454)

Here she indicates that she uses English to make a status update since she likes to post in English about her feelings, but that she does not want other people to directly know about this. This creates the suggestion that she believes her Facebook friends are not able to understand her posts in English. However, as she explains later on, this actually serves as a prompt for people to ask about what she has posted in English and possibly for further discussion on the post in the comments. Posting in English thus provides her with a way to initiate further interaction in her first language. In her explanation of the post she indicated that using English on Facebook serves as a way to learn and practice. Her friends in the focus group interview evaluated this form of elicitation in a different context saying that her posts in English are a call for attention. Interesting to note is that the follow up comments on her posts are all in Thai. She explained that some people are just interested in finding out how to post certain things in English and not really interested in how she feels, whereas others are genuinely interested in finding out how she is doing. Posting Facebook status updates in English to her is a practice that creates the affordance to practice using English and at the same time functions as a tool that allows her to elicit more interaction (in Thai) on the use of English in posts, and on the actual post.

Figure 9 shows another post in which a student-teacher uses the public domain of a Facebook status update as a way to express his feelings.

Figure 9 Facebook status update of a student-teacher



This post reveals an interesting English literacy practice in that it involves lyrics that have been translated from Thai into English. The lyrics are creatively interpreted and translated from Thai into English to reflect his feelings toward his ex-boyfriend. In this post he applies the same strategy as the student-teacher in figure 9 in that he posted it in English to make sure that the person for whom it was meant did not see it or understand it. As he explained in the focus group interview:

“actually I want to tell somebody about ah about my feeling for someone (.) but I don’t want him to know (.) if I post it in Thai (.) suppose in Thai he read and understand what I’m thinking about him so (.) so I think it’s better to ah translate into English cause I can practice my English and tell him in the same time” (Quote focus group 4 group A 17/11/2015 line 454)

In this Facebook status update English is not only used as a means to practice his English skills, but also as a tool to express his feelings for someone, an ex-boyfriend, in the public domain in a language that the person whom this message is about cannot understand. These kinds of English literacy events, the use of English to express both negative and positive emotions in the public domain on

Facebook, are used by a number of student-teachers. In almost all cases the people addressed in these posts are not able to understand the message in English. Student-teachers indicate that they feel they dare to say more in English. Posting in English allows them to express themselves in a semi public domain, their Facebook friends group, without that person directly understanding what is being said. Another reason student-teachers cited for the use of English is that, to them, English creates the affordance to be more direct to someone in the communication of a message as it is perceived by the student-teachers as 'softer' than Thai. Two student-teachers explained during a focus group interview that, in some cases, English is a more suitable medium of communication in their digital communication practices to vent their anger than Thai.

Excerpt 22. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

518 Toey: {TH: yes but only very little (.) sometimes (.) once when I curse at someone (.) curse at someone else (*Toey and Mink here shake hands to acknowledge they do the same on Facebook*) I felt like} hate hate she or he (.) I want (.) I don't want to (.) blame (.) {TH: how do you say that} blame them in Thai (.) yes

519 (*shake hands again*)

520 June: {TH:[real people can write swear words]}

521 INT: [ok so that's (.) you're doing the same thing ↑

522 Mink: YES (laughs) (.)

523 INT: ok that's because they cannot understand it or they can

524 Toey: oh maybe

525 Nu: maybe (.) I think they can't understand me

526 Toey: {TH: but I don't how to put it in Thai (.)} English is [soft]

527 Mink: [soft] soft in English

- 528 Nu: in English
- 529 Mink: {TH: really (.) it's softer}
- 530 INT: so is it easier to get angry with someone in English
- 531 Mink: yes (laughs) {TH: it's bad}

This excerpt shows that several students use English to curse and vent their anger at people in English on Facebook or that they are familiar with this practice (lines 518 – 519). The use of English in Facebook status updates allows the participants to vent their anger at that particular person while making the writer believe that it will come across softer when this is done in English. For instance, in lines 526 – 531 Nu and Mink agree that that it is softer to do this in English while they leave it unclear if the people they are swearing at or “blaming” can actually understand their message. Expressing negative emotions in an L2 is often explained as creating a sense of detachment (Gumperz, 1982; Pavlenko, 2004, 2007) and it might therefore not be surprising to see student-teachers perceive swearing or cursing at someone in English as coming across as softer. This is a practice that is observed throughout the focus group interviews with the majority of the student-teachers indicating that they find it easier to express certain emotions in English.

However, what makes the way they engage in this practice of posting interesting is that student-teachers combine this perceived emotional detachment with the use of English as a way of excluding people from their readership. This selective limiting of their readership is not only used for posts involving emotions but is also applied to exclude for instance parents from being informed about their practices. The excerpt below provides a good example of this practice in which some of the student-teachers have ‘friended’ their parents on Facebook, but post in English to prevent their parents from reading their ‘secret’ posts.

Excerpt 23. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers.

- 208 Som:       some time we talk in English also (.) write in English when we have secret thing to say
- 209 All:       YES YES
- 210 Som:       get my parents off my back
- 211 Jenny       and they cannot read English so that's a good thing
- 212 Int       ok and that is on Line
- 213 Jenny       facebook
- 214 Noon       sometime posting on facebook (.) sometimes post something you don't want to  
understand you cannot understand because mostly friend in facebook is Thai or: other  
countries

This excerpt shows how student-teachers purposefully make use of their English abilities to exclude people from becoming active participants while discussing topics such as Facebook 'secrets' in semi-public spaces. Student-teachers mentioned in other focus group interviews as well that they do not only use this to prevent their parents from reading their posts on Facebook, but also in some cases with boyfriends or friends who cannot understand English.

Another affordance that the use English creates for the student-teachers is that it allows them to engage in fewer complex rhetorical structures in English than in Thai in order to communicate the same message. This partly has to do with the hierarchical social structure in Thai society and the prominence of the notion of face. Different registers are used when talking to older people or people with a higher social status and people have to engage in different more complex discourse practices to interact with people across the different levels of social status and age. An interesting discussion ensued among Jenny, Noon, Bank and Som when they were asked if they felt like a slightly different person

when they were using English instead of Thai. In their discussion, they highlight the differences in discourse practices they engage in while communicating in Thai and in English.

Excerpt 24. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

385 Jenny: {TH: for example I'm talking to a person who is a friend and I'm speaking Thai I cannot speak in a straightforward way unless you make it into an art (.) but when I'm speaking English we can be straightforward (.) we can be upright and straightforward and they'll be like OK (.) but with Thais if you speak in straightforward words people easily get hurt

386 Noon: {TH: you get the feeling that you have to be indirect}

387 Jenny: {TH: yeah you have to make a detour around the world}

388 Noon: {TH: circumventing in a way that you have to use antiquated language (.) yeah something like that}

389 Jenny: {TH: yeah}

390 Noon: {TH: \*inaudible\*}

391 Jenny: {TH: but it gives a bad feeling (.) that they don't accept reality}

392 Noon: {TH: they don't accept reality and they like to look at what other people are doing}

Jenny and Noon emphasize in lines 385 – 388 that they have to engage in complex discourse practices in order to communicate an honest and straightforward message in Thai, whereas they feel that this is not the case when using English. Similar to the example in the excerpt above, it indicates that English creates the affordance of emotional detachment and that therefore certain straightforward messages are more easily expressed in English. This contrasts sharply with the complex discourses practices they need to engage in a culture in which the notion of face is important in their daily interaction (lines 385 – 388). Jenny and Noon even speculate in lines 391 – 392 that these complex discourse practices are

needed because some people are unwilling to accept reality if they are spoken to in an honest and straightforward way without “detours” and “antiquated language”.

This example demonstrates a level of awareness of the different ways that language mediates our social actions, mediates our representation of reality and the situated nature of language as a social practice. In their particular case, they also show awareness of how different languages mediate social practices in different ways. Excerpt 20 and 22 demonstrate that a number of student-teachers indicate that their appropriation of English in online social media English creates the affordance, that can be interpreted as emotional detachment, to express positive and negative emotions about things or people. Engaging in these practices in Thai might result in different outcomes. This difference between the emotional detachment in English and the emotional load it bears in Thai is explained by two student-teachers as follows.

Excerpt 25. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

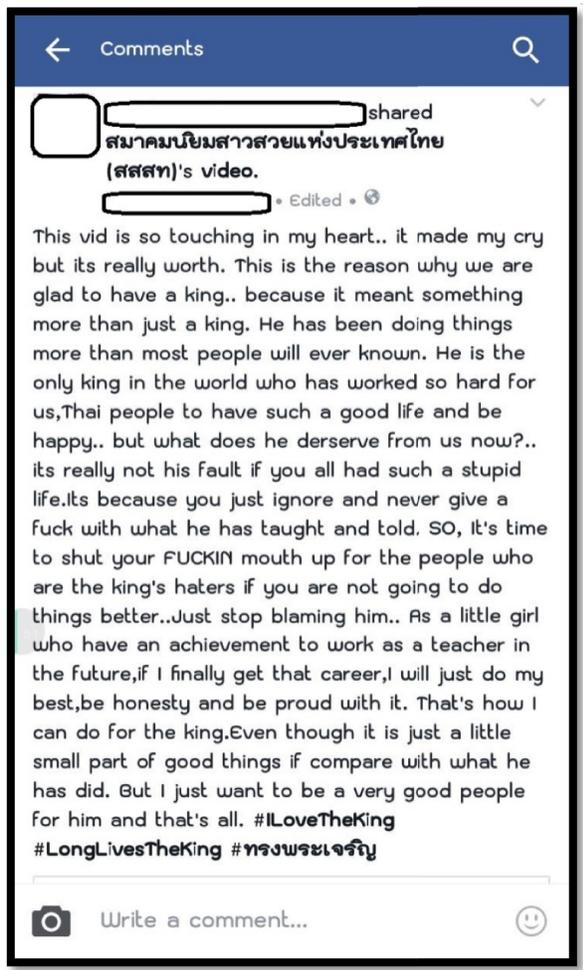
412 Bank:        [{{TH: the feeling is:: (. ) it’s not the same (. ) if you say I love you (. )}} when you say it in  
                    Thai it feels like

413 Jenny:        [{{(nods) yeah (2.0) {TH: the same as it tickles if you say it in Thai}}] yah

In this excerpt Bank and Jenny explain this emotional detachment they are able to maintain in English literacy events and compare it to the exciting, bodily experience communicating the same message in Thai would create. Engaging in these digitally mediated English literacy practices illustrates a level of awareness of the use of English and shows active engagement in English literacy practices outside the institutional language use spaces. It also demonstrates the development of a range of autonomous English discourse practices that they engage in independent of a requirement to use it in any assessment based classroom activities.

The Facebook status update in figure 10 below shows another application of these independent digitally mediated English literacy practices.

Figure 10 Facebook status update of a student-teacher



In this Facebook status update, the student-teacher has shared a video of the now late King Rama IX of Thailand as a response to a number of negative comments it received at the time, both in Thai and in English. In this post, the student-teacher uses English not to exclude people from how an audience but rather to include people in her readership to find a middle road to accommodate all readers in her group of Facebook friends. She explained her intention to post in English to include a wider readership as follows:

“I think in (1.0) in English (2.0) I (.) like I said (.) posting in English is better (.) Thai people can read it also (.) some of Thai people and foreigners can read it also (.) so it’s like a central {TH: like a middle road that everyone can read}” (Quote focus group 4 group A 17/11/2015 line 374)

Her choice to post in English and thereby to widen the readership of her post in English contrasts with the use of English as a tool to exclude people from reading a Facebook post that was observed in the previous two Facebook status updates. She explained in the focus group interview that she loves to post long status updates like the one in figure 10 above and that she rarely posts in Thai on her Facebook account. Instead of using English as a way to elicit interaction on the topic, as was observed in the first Facebook status update, here she mentioned that she wants to prevent questions about her post from her foreign Facebook friends by refraining from posting about a Thai topic in Thai. However, the aim of the post in the first place was also, as she explained later on, to provide insight into what it means to live in a monarchy and have a king like the one she describes in her post. According to her, this is an experience which a lot of people outside Thailand cannot relate to. Similar to the Facebook status update in figure 9, she posted this in English as she thought that her language use in Thai would be harsher than the current message posted in English. This message is, according to her, softer and easier to communicate in English despite the presence of several curse words and other forms of strong language.

In addition to her strategic use of English to post a Facebook status update, her attempt to include a wider readership of her Facebook post also reveals the composition of her circle of Facebook friends which hints at a mixed group of people of whom the majority is able to understand English. For her and several other student-teachers, this practice of posting in English with the clear intention of including a wider readership of non-Thai speaking Facebook friends also reveals a larger network of connected digital English literacy practices.

What the example above shows is that the practices intersecting at the site of engagement of a Facebook post in English are part of a larger network of linked sites of engagement and practices in which student-teachers engage in English literacy practices. These practices include a range of interests and extend beyond their practices on Facebook. For instance, the student-teacher who made the status update in figure 9 indicated that his Facebook network is based entirely on Thai friends residing in Thailand whereas others use Facebook also as a space to maintain relationships with both Thai and foreign contacts. Other student-teachers use Twitter as their main site of English language production in which they translate posts from their Thai or Korean idols into English or follow English speaking people on the basis of a particular interest. These interests include a variety of different areas such as Japanese manga and comics, drawing, cooking, English language learning, movies and so forth. However, these interests, and the use of English to engage in literacy events related to these interests, are not confined to one particular space online but rather situated across a network of linked sites of engagement — what Gee (2005) calls affinity spaces —in which the student-teachers talk about or comment on their interests. A good example of this can be found in the following two Facebook status updates in figure 11 made by another student-teacher.

Figure 11 Facebook status update of a student-teacher



In this Facebook status update the student-teacher shares a link to a final episode of an online animation series, *Mobile Suit Gundam SEED Destiny*, a sequel to the 2004 Japanese anime television series *Gundam SEED*. This animation is provided on YouTube both dubbed and with English subtitles since the original is in Japanese. This student-teacher is particularly interested in watching Japanese cartoons. In one of the earlier focus group interviews, she mentioned that she watches a variety of television animations, cartoons and reads comics on a daily basis. In her post in figure 11 she comments on an event unfolding in one particular episode, the relationship between Kira Yamato, the hero in the series and Lacus Clyne, the female protagonist. The post addresses her friends, other people who are interested in these cartoons, on Facebook about the developments in this particular episode.

Her way of writing gives the impression that a number of people among her Facebook friends are familiar with the animation series and watching the series with recently released subtitles at a similar pace as she is and so share sufficient background knowledge to understand this post. In addition to a web board where she often finds links to Japanese animations, Facebook is the primary space for her to talk about Japanese cartoons and animations. She shares this interest with a couple of classmates who were not active participants in this research. Her Facebook time line then functioned as an example of an affinity space (Gee, 2005) in which links to videos with English subtitles and alternative endings made by other people were shared. Her Facebook time line also functioned, to her at least, as a space to talk about the animations and cartoons. This site of engagement in the form of a Facebook status update also forms part of a larger network of connected digitally mediated English literacy practices. In this larger network student-teachers, like the one who made the Facebook posts in figure 11, engage in a wide variety of English literacy practices. Some students for instance follow Korean singers and movie stars on designated fan pages on Twitter and translate these English messages into Thai so that they can be shared with other fans in her group of Twitter followers. Digital technology, then, creates the affordance to access routes to engage in these literacy practices. Smart phones with internet

connections, desktop computers and tablets are material examples of this, but other more immaterial tools should also be taken into account such as the networks of social relationships through which links, ideas, and interests are shared and discussed. These networks of relationships, often including both people in participants' direct physical environment and people outside of that environment, form important routes for them to access these literacy events.

Other examples of these digital English literacy practices can, for instance, be found by tracing the literacy practices beyond the second Facebook status update in figure 9. The actual status update is a liberal translation and adaptation of the lyrics of a Thai song into English. The student-teacher who posted this explained in one of the earlier focus group interviews that creative writing is one of his interests and that he is part of a community of creative writers online. He writes short stories and novels which he posts and shares on a subsection of a popular Thai web forum. He mentioned that his stories are read by about 10,000 people, although it did not become clear from the interview if these were views or actual people who read his stories. This shows that this student-teacher's literacy practices, such as creative writing, are not confined to one particular language but that they take place in both Thai and English and are spread over a number of different social spaces. This simultaneous use of both English and Thai in student-teachers' digital literacy practices is observed in the digital literacy practices of other student-teachers as well.

In chapters 5 and 6, it became clear that student-teachers make strategic use of English as a tool to find, for instance, special or different information to complete homework assignments. Student-teachers seem to be well aware of the affordance and potential of using different languages online to find information. A good example of this affordance is illustrated in one student-teacher's interest in drawing which involves a combination of both Thai and English literacy practices. Figure 8 below shows an example of one of her drawings that she made and posted on Instagram.

Figure 12: An anonymized Instagram post of drawings



Her drawings usually involve representations of Thai culture such as holidays, festivals or beliefs. In this particular example, the Loy Krathong festival is pictured with the local celebration traditions of four provinces in Thailand. She explained that the drawings are done on paper first after which she scans these pictures and uploads them onto Facebook and Instagram. The text in the picture is entirely in Thai whereas the post on Instagram is a mix of both English and Thai. She explained that her fan page is predominantly in Thai since her pictures involve typical Thai cultural practices and her followers are mostly people from Thailand. However, in order to improve her drawing skills and techniques, she frequently watches YouTube clips and reads blogs, tutorials and other websites which are predominantly published in English. Her choice to search in English is based on the lack of information available in Thai. She indicated that drawing cartoons is not that popular in Thailand and that therefore little information was available in Thai for her to develop her drawing skills. Her English skills combined with her digital literacy skills however, provide her with the skills to navigate the routes to access these kinds of literacy events and engage in them online since the kind of cartoon artwork she makes is not that popular in Thailand. So English literacy practices are not only present at the actual site of

engagement of posting this picture on Instagram and Facebook, but also mediate the trajectories and moments of action that lead up to this particular site of engagement. The skills she develops as part of engaging in these practices also play an interesting role in her teaching practices. While visiting her at the school where she did part of her teaching practicum, she showed me several pictures she had drawn herself as part of the teaching materials she used in class (figure 13).

Figure 13 Teaching materials drawn by a student-teacher



She explained that these pictures helped to supplement the satellite distance-education English language teaching method that is provided to students in the rural areas. This way of teaching English is used by smaller schools and students watch a class being taught English on television at scheduled times and they have to try and complete exercises from a textbook. However, as she explained, this broadcast cannot be paused or played again, so she developed her own materials to involve the students in some follow-up activities. These pictures caught students' attention and increased the level of interactivity of the teaching activities to compensate for the pace and lack of interactivity of the televised lesson. They

also allowed here to simplify the presentation of for instance the complex instructions and explanations in the broadcast lesson.

#### 7.6 Online boyfriends, grammar lessons and part-time jobs: a wider network of connected digital English practices

Tracing the practices that intersect at these sites of engagement of these Facebook status updates reveals a number of digital English literacy practices that student-teachers engage in. One of the observations made was that student-teachers' English literacy practices are not limited to posting on Facebook or other forms of social media but that they also involve interacting with other competent speakers of English in online spaces. The following excerpt is taken from a focus group interview and shows how digital technology creates affordances for learning outside the classroom by creating opportunities for interacting with other English language learners or proficient speakers of English. Student-teachers were asked how they felt their online chat interaction helped them in developing their English language abilities.

Excerpt 26. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

- 256 INT        yah (.) and do you feel that it really helps you in improving your English
- 257 Som        yeah help a lot
- 258 Jenny       a lot
- 259 Noon        sometime improve myself but sometime improve (.) themselves
- 260 Jenny       I think it just work for native speakers (.) you know if we talk with a native speaker or a friend who knows a lot about English like her friend from France he knows a lot about English when she talks with him in the right way (.) with the right grammar it makes sense and can be improve

261 Int: yeah (1.0) is it really like (.) having this communication online helps you in improving your skills

262 Som: yes yes

263 Int: do you think it is important for you because you are also going to become future teachers that your English

264 Som: it's one way to (.) improve English for me

265 Noon: [yeah yeah]

266 Jenny: [yeah yeah]

267 Int: because is it something that you do not get from studying only

268 Jenny: yes because we do not use so much in daily life

269 Som: remember grammar is boring [ (.) ] not as like using real you know

270 Noon: [yeah]

271 Int: yep (.) no sorry go ahead

272 Som: huh↑

273 Int: I fully agree with you (.) grammar is boring

274 Noon: It's not the essence to using only communication

275 Som: teacher tell us to remember (.) remember and then we forget because we don't use English

This excerpt shows how the trainees believe that digital technology creates affordances to engage in communicative English language use outside the classroom. Both Jenny and Som indicate that chatting with foreigners online is a way of improving their English abilities (lines 257-264). However, as Jenny indicates, and this was corroborated by others at various times during the focus group interviews, this is one of the many practices they engage in that creates the affordance to engage in English literacy

practices. Line 260 shows that these opportunities to use English are not just about communicating with another speaker of English but that they also provide a stepping stone to develop their English language abilities. In some cases, this stepping stone, or scaffold, provides participants with feedback on their language use, and if this feedback is noticed (Schmidt, 2001), it can facilitate trainees' English language development. The comment in line 260 indicates that talking about language use is also part of these conversations. Also, the fact that Jenny is talking about the online learning practice of Som shows that this learning experience is shared between the student-teachers and that some form of meta-linguistic talk is taking place as well. In lines 268-269, the trainees differentiate between these online learning experiences, which create opportunities to use the language in a "real" way, and their foreign language classroom experience of "remembering [sic] grammar". In addition, these digitally mediated learning practices do not only provide the opportunity to practice English, but they also provide a chance to get exposed to and develop situated literacies (Gee, 2008). By chatting to foreigners in online spaces, they create the opportunity to use English communicatively and engage in the wider intercultural social practices that are an important part of this situated form of language use.

Participants are aware of the learning potential of these online chats and some of them indicated that if they do not engage in these literacy practices anymore they perceive a change in their English abilities. In the excerpt below I started with the question of whether they chatted with English speakers online.

Excerpt 27. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

486 Toey: {TH: I had it before but now not anymore}

487 Mai: {TH: yes}

488 (3.0)

489 INT: but do you chat with people in English

490 Toey: no

491 Nu: no

492 Mai: now {TH: I don't}

493 Toey: I think err: I think chatting with [errr:: ]

494 June: [TH: you do]

495 Toey: {TH: foreigners} improve my English {TH: really (.) seriously I mean it} but for me (.) I don't have friend of another country {TH: I err never talk (.) and I have the feeling my English has gone down} my English ehm (*makes hand gesture down*) change (.) down

This excerpt shows that not all of the student-teachers actively maintain communication with foreigners online. In this focus group, only Nu indicated that she is actively texting, (not 'chatting' hence her 'no' in the excerpt above) with other non-Thai speakers of English. However, they do frequently refer to other people such as Som, Jenny, and Bank, their classmates, as the 'better English speakers' since they 'talk to foreigners'. It seems that among the participants, the practice of chatting or texting with foreigners is associated with better English skills and more confidence in using the language communicatively in the classroom. This also results in those more confident speakers taking up more vocal roles in the classroom in skits such as described in vignette 5 in section 7.4 of this chapter. However, chatting in English to foreigners is not a stable practice or something that student-teachers engage in on a regular basis and changes in their engagement in these practices might affect their English language abilities as Toey explains in line 486.

However, the practice of chatting with foreigners online is not solely focused on improving their English language skills; it is also mediated by other discourses. Throughout the interviews, student-teachers were continuously teasing each other when they talked about the interactions they had with foreigners. Early on in the focus group interviews it became clear that the relationships that were built

through these chat sessions potentially went beyond the level of friendship or that more intimate topics were discussed. The following excerpt provides insight into the teasing that was going on during the interviews.

Excerpt 28. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

231 INT: and where are they from mostly (.) are they from Asia Europe or America or:

232 Jenny: I have one errr (1.0) [close friend (.)] yeah a close friend

233 ALL: [(start laughing)]

234 Jan: (waves 'no finger' in Jenny's face)

235 Bank: boyfriend boyfriend

236 Jenny: (sits back) yeah just a friend from America

The excerpt suggest that Jenny's friends know more about her online chat practices than she wanted to admit in her answer to me in line 232. As she stumbles over her description of her relationship with her American friend, the teasing that goes on between the other participants suggests that it is more than just being friends. However, despite this teasing, Jenny maintains throughout the interviews that he is as she said "just a friend from America". Although Jenny is being teased in this particular instance, Jenny also often teases other people about their online chat practices. In the following excerpt Bank is talking about his chats with other speakers of English and he starts by making an interesting comparison.

Excerpt 29. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

99 Bank: oh yes yes (.) it's like her (points to Jenny) I talk to foreigners on the internet

100 Jenny: (smirks) mmmhhh ↑ mmmhh ↑ his friends (.) they are mostly Asian

101 Bank: (slaps Jenny on the arm) awh:: (.) but she talk foreigner more in asia than in Europe or America

102 INT: and do you think it's ah (.) because their first language is probably not English right↑

103 Bank: yes

104 INT: do you feel more comfortable speaking English to other people (.) whose first language is not English than to native speakers of English↑(.) does it make a difference to you↑

105 Bank: I think it's better for ASEAN ehm Asian because ah:: (.) something ah when you talk about something to the Europe they don't understand what what I'm talking (.) but if we talk in ah (.) with asia we understand more but sometimes we talk about the culture (1.0)

106 Jan: [mmhh mmhh yeah]  
 Som: [mmhh mmhh yeah]  
 Jenny: [mmhh mmhh yeah] oohhhhh sure

107 Bank: CULTURE YEAH (.) I'm talking about the culture OK↑ (1.0) some culture is the same as them

108 INT: ok so you share (.) like [the cultural overlap is bigger right↑]

109 Jan: [(whispers something to IN inaudible)]

110 Bank: yeah (1.0) (moves back to air slap Jan in the face and smiles afterward)

111 Jan: {TH: yeah yeah like he's talking about culture}

112 Jenny: {TH: what else can you talk about}

In this excerpt it becomes clear that students are well-informed of each other's chat practices. Bank starts in line 99 by saying that his contact is similar to what Jenny does online. Jenny responds and

differentiates between his preference to chat with people in Asia whose first language is not English and her preference to chat with native speakers of English. Although the learning potential of talking to people from similar or different cultures might play a role, the teasing at the end of the excerpt (lines 106 – 112) suggests that the preference of talking to Asians or westerners is most likely based on their personal attraction to people from these areas. Although others tease Bank about his claims about the cultural exchange in general, Jan and Jenny make sarcastic comments in particular about the topic of Bank's conversation in lines 111 and 112. These forms of teasing among student-teachers about the interaction they have with foreigners is not limited to online practices. Both Jenny and Som have summer jobs in Bangkok where they work in tourist areas and get to meet a number of foreigners who are coming to their shops. When Som was asked about her experience working in Bangkok the mutual teasing between the student-teachers revealed interesting insights into their motives for going to Bangkok and actively creating these opportunities to meet foreigners.

Excerpt 30. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

225 Som: my friends asked me to go with her and I thought oh↑↓ that's interesting get money  
and (.) earn experience

226 INT: and did you know beforehand that you had to use English or

227 Som: yeah I know how to use

228 INT: no I mean did you know beforehand that you had to use English or was it that you got  
there and

229 Som: no I know (.) I know

230 Jenny: it was her purpose

231 Som: (tries to keep a straight face presses lips together not to smile)

232 Bank: her purpose

- 233 ALL: (start laughing in a cheeky way)
- 234 Som: (flushes smiles a bit shyly)
- 235 Jenny: YES but obviously
- 236 Som: (makes a short “cut it out” gesture to BK) {TH: finished}
- 237 INT: what was the purpose of going there ↑
- 238 Jenny: to start using English {TH: fluently and she wants to speak English [ (1.0) ] not to meet any foreigners (said in a sarcastic voice)}
- 239 Som: [ {TH: YES} ]  
 [(makes a hitting gesture toward Jenny and Bank [TH: yes now it’s enough (.) back off]
- 240 ALL: (start laughing)
- 241 Jenny: {TH: oh look who’s talking now (.) back off (.) mmh getting experience right (looking at Bank and Jan)}

This excerpt provides an interesting insight into Som’s motives for working in Bangkok and how it provides not only an opportunity to make money and get working experience, which includes experience using English (line 229), but also an opportunity to meet foreigners in person, as Jenny points out in line 238. This teasing and Jenny’s sarcastic comments in line 238 are a way of getting back at Som for teasing her earlier on in the interview about her alleged foreign boyfriend. These excerpts suggest that their attempts at finding opportunities to practice and improve their English skills are not only related to improving their language skills or becoming English teachers. They should also be seen within the wider discourse of social mobility and the discourse of transnational relationships between foreign men and Thai women which for the latter often means a more financially secure and stable future, in particular in the more rural areas (Cohen, 2003; Suksomboon, 2008).

## 7.7 Sexual solicitation and presenting the self online: Discourses inhibiting student-teachers' digital English literacy practices

Although the majority of the student-teachers acknowledged the learning potential of engaging in these digital English literacy practices, not all of them actively engaged in these practices. Various student-teachers indicated that chatting to non-Thai speakers of English either through Facebook or other media is something that they are afraid of. Three themes were foregrounded in the focus group interviews as reasons why students in some cases refrained from using English in their digital practices or chatting to speakers of English.

In the section above it became clear that the motives for interacting with other speakers of English online are sometimes mediated by discourses other than practicing their English skills and cultural exchange. During one of the interviews, we were exploring the different experiences student-teachers have had while engaging in digital English literacy events online. One of the themes that surfaced was the unpredictability of the chats and what might happen in these chats. The following excerpt describes the fear that is shared among some of the student-teachers that foreign men might expose themselves to them over video chats or other chats by sending pictures of their private parts.

Excerpt 31. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

132 Jan: {TH: I have}

133 Tian: {TH: but it was terrible}

134 Som: {TH: she has}

135 Jan: {TH: I have}

136 Int: yeah sometimes↑

137 Jan: yeah I want to talk to my foreigner (\*mispronounces)

138 Jenny: foreigner

139 Jan: ah yeah foreigner but men like to show (.) THAT (pointing down)

140 All: (burst out in laughter 20.0)

141 Jan: no no I afraid that (.) I no see

142 Jenny: yeah yeah she is afraid that

143 Bank: she's afraid that she'll ah (.) the foreigner that she talk to maybe do something rude

This excerpt demonstrates how some of the participants engaging in chats with foreigners have a well-founded fear of being confronted with unwanted sexual solicitation. In many cases the participants have already been confronted with this and for some of them, like Jan, this has been one of the reasons for her not to engage in chats with foreigners online any more. This discourse of unwanted sexual solicitation and exposure in online communication is not unique to this particular context or age group (Baumgartner, Valkenburg and Peter, 2010; Valkenburg and Peter, 2010). However, the co-construction of her experience by her friends (132 – 135 and 142 – 143) indicates that this experience has at least been shared and discussed among them. Several turns later I discussed this fear with them and I asked them if they were afraid that foreign men might send them intimate pictures over chats and all of them, both female and male, unanimously responded yes. However, despite the presence of this discourse, not everyone is held back in their chat practices since a number of student-teachers still chat with foreigners. These student-teachers draw on a range of digital literacy skills in which they assess and choose websites to chat with foreigners that they believe are safe. Websites such as 'interpals.net' are starting points after which they continue this interaction over Skype and other chat programs. However, as Jenny mentioned, it is rare to come across a person like the one she has been chatting with for three years.

Another theme that was foregrounded involved student-teachers' identity as future English teachers or students enrolled in an English program. A number of student-teachers explained that they

were afraid their English skills were not good enough to make a grammatically correct post in English on social media and as a result refrained from posting online or chatting to foreigners. The following excerpt shows how one student-teacher, Jan, explains why she does not post in English on Facebook despite the fact that she would like to be more active on Facebook.

Excerpt 32. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

446 Jan: {TH: I want to 'play' more in English (.) but I'm afraid that I write something incorrectly}

447 Tian: {TH: the ones I write are not in such smart English either}

448 Jan: {TH: I'm afraid I'm making grammatical mistakes (.) I'm afraid of grammatical mistakes and that what I'm saying looks stupid (.) instead of showing them that I'm smart (1.0) I'm afraid that when I write it in English and the grammar is incorrect (.) and the people who know it will read that it's wrong (.) I'm afraid they'll think that I'm stupid (.) yeah like that

449 INT: ok so that's that's the most important reason why you don't post in English

450 Jan: {TH: but I like to read it}

451 INT: ok so you like to read what other people write

452 Jan: {TH: yeah like his (points to Bank) (.) I read from them (.) what they post in English}

In this excerpt Jan explains that despite her desire to be more active in English on social media, she is afraid that her posts will be grammatically incorrect and that it will make her look “stupid”, line 448, “instead of showing them that I'm smart”. She implies here that there is a relationship between her digital English literacy practices on platforms, such as Facebook in the current example, and the perception that other people will have of her as an aspiring English teacher. This link was not only made by Jan, but also by other student-teachers. These student-teachers, of which the majority did not exhibit

high levels of confidence in using English as shown by Bank, Som, Noon and Jenny, indicated that they felt their identities as aspiring English teachers and assumed competent speakers of English could be negatively affected. In addition to their identities as student-teachers and speakers of English, Jan also indicated that the perception of how they studied at the university could be negatively affected by their digital English literacy practices. Several turns later she said:

“{TH: yeah but I’m afraid the grammar is incorrect and people who know will think (.) ah how does that teacher study}”.

However, not everyone was as inhibited in their digital English literacy practices as Jan. For some, engaging in digital literacy events provides an opportunity to proof-read the posts or chats they make in English. Most of the student-teachers said they would check their grammar and spelling and edit the post when necessary. In the excerpt below, Toey, Mink, June and Nu explain how they engage in this practice of proof reading their online posts and comments in English and how it relates to their Facebook identity as recorded in their Facebook profiles. I asked them if they proofread any of their status updates and comments before posting them.

Excerpt 33. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

655 Toey: (nods) (.) check it

656 INT: what do you check (.) grammar or spelling or (.) syntax or:

657 Toey: grammar (.) for me

658 Mink: (shakes head) {TH: no I never check it}

659 Toey: grammar and spelling

660 Mink: yeah spelling

661 June: spelling

662 INT: is it important for you that you check it

663 (3.0)

664 Nu: {TH: important}

665 Toey: {TH: yeah important}

666 Mink: {TH: REALLY important}

667 Toey: what we (.) because my my profile says {TH: learns in} [English program]

668 Mink: [English program] education

669 Toey: I must to check grammar {TH: other people will think that I can because I'm an English teacher}

670 INT: ok ok (.) so it's important that you show to the people on Facebook that what you {TH: is it important that the people on facebook know that you're a teacher and that you have to write correct English}

671 Toey: {TH: [important]}

672 Mink: {TH: [important]}

673 Nu: {TH: [important]}

(3.0)

674 June: {TH: usually if you tell people that you're studying English or becoming a teacher (.) they think that you can speak English}

675 Mink: [yeah yeah] yeah {TH: say something nah}

676 Toey: [yeah yeah]

677 June: {TH: that's so smart that you're studying English}

In lines 655 – 666 Mink, Toey and June indicate the importance of correct spelling and grammar in their posts as their Facebook profiles state that they are student-teachers of English and that the general perception of outsiders (lines 669 and 674) is that therefore they are able to use English correctly in their digital English literacy practices. Mink, Toey and June provide some insight into what is

said to them by other people (lines 675 – 677) when they tell them they are student-teachers of English. They are, for instance, asked to say something in English (line 675), or they are complimented and told they are smart (line 677). This provides further context to the kinds of fears expressed by Jan for instance, as it seems that the default public opinion is that English is something special to study and that people who study English must, therefore, be smart. However, it also provides insight into the perception of the wider public that English is a difficult language to learn and only spoken by a select group of people. These perceptions and beliefs from people in Thai society about the assumed abilities of English teachers and student-teachers of English suggest that there is a tension between student-teachers digital literacy practices and their English language learning practices. This tension exists between student-teachers' efforts to uphold an image of English language competence, or refrain from engaging in practices that might disprove this competence, and their efforts to actively work on their English language skills development. These observations will be further discussed in the next chapter and placed within a wider context of the practices and discourses in place on learning, teaching, English literacy practices and the role of digital technology within the university, the Thai ministry of Education and Thai society in general.

## 7.8 Conclusion

This chapter has traced student-teachers' English literacy practices and the digital tools they use to engage in these practices, beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom. The current situation shows that student-teachers' out-of-class literacy practices include a network of activities geared toward the anticipated use of English inside the classroom and a number of more autonomous digitally mediated English literacy practices. Digital technology forms an important means in both types of English literacy practices as it provides a tool that allows student-teachers access to English literacy events and a number of related information resources about the English language. The main difference

between these two types of English literacy practices lies in the potential of student-teachers' autonomous digital English literacy practices to develop individual English discourse practices. These practices expand beyond the rather limited repertoire of English language features that is required to participate in the in-class literacy practices and provide student-teachers with the opportunity to engage in situated English literacy practices. However, there is a large amount of variation between student-teachers' digital practices and the extent to which their English literacy practices cycle through these moments of digitally mediated action. Not all student-teachers' are equally engaged in these practices even though the majority of them recognize the English language learning potential of engaging in these practices. The reasons and discourses that are mediating the engagement, or, lack of engagement in these practices and how these practices originate from past actions or take place as anticipation of future practices are discussed in the next chapter within the wider context of discourses about education and technology in Thai society.

## Chapter 8: Learning, English literacy and digital tools in Thai society

### 8.1 Introduction

In the previous chapters I have described how the day-to-day digitally mediated practices of a group of Thai student-teachers create affordances and constraints for engaging in a number of English literacy events across a network of linked social spaces. The use of English in the classroom is mediated by a dominant discourse which severely limits the opportunities for student-teachers to engage in English literacy events. In addition, literacy events that they do engage in often involve predictable language functions which are already familiar to them. This discourse limits the opportunities student-teachers get to develop both communicative English skills and English language skills for classroom purposes.

In contrast, outside the classroom, digital technologies create a number of affordances for student-teachers to engage in often individualized trajectories of English literacy and learning as they rely on these technologies to mediate their social practices, access information online and navigate routes to English literacy events outside the classroom. Digital technology creates access to English literacy events in a context in which exposure to English would otherwise be scarce. These digital literacy events create opportunities for them to use English for a range of different individual purposes. Some of these out-of-class English literacy events anticipate the use of English in the classroom for particular assignments whereas other literacy events are independent of school-based assignments and are often integrated into student-teachers' social practices.

At the same time, the fact that these literacy events occur as part of their social practices and are not directly related to their learning does not mean that part of these more individualized trajectories of English literacy practices do not have the potential to positively contribute to student-teachers' English language development. On the contrary, the semiotic artifacts that mediate these literacy events and that are produced at these sites of engagement can afford *heterochrony* and

mediate other learning related sites of engagement as resemiotizations of earlier artifacts. This chapter will take these findings as the starting point to widen the circumference and analyze how these English literacy practices and the tools that allow students to engage in these practices relate to the larger discourses in Thai society on social life, learning and literacy.

## 8.2 Linking past, present and future practices of student-teachers.

This section starts with a discussion of the anticipatory discourses of the student-teachers' future professional practices to analyze how their current and past learning experiences, embedded in their historical bodies, affect the formulation of their views on learning and teaching in the future. Anticipatory discourses provide insight into how current actions are taken with the potential of anticipating future action. However, they also allow us to understand how world views and attitudes toward agency, self efficacy and empowerment play a role in discourses on future actions. Analyzing anticipatory discourses at different levels of society allows us to make meaningful links between the anticipatory discourses and action, or inaction, for example at the ministerial level and how this affects action and practices at the university level and the classroom level.

### 8.2.1 Student-teachers' historical bodies as a way to understand current practices

The practices that have been observed in the previous chapters do not occur in isolation but are part of a larger socio-ecosystem in which discourses and practices cycle through moments of action and make meaningful links between the past, present and the future. These actions take place at the intersection of the interaction order, the discourses that are relevant to that particular moment of action and place, and, the actors' historical bodies (Scollon, 1999, 2002). Social action, therefore, does not take place only in the here and now, but is linked with the past through our past practices and discourses embodied in our historical bodies, and makes new links to the future through anticipatory

discourses and anticipated actions (Scollon, 2002). Central to this idea is the historical body, an organic, dynamic storehouse of discourses which are constructed as the result of our past and present interactions with the environment (Scollon, 2002, S. Scollon, 1998, 2001; Jones, 2008).

The historical body, as Jones explains, is formed “bit by bit through incremental anticipatory chains of actions that propel an individual towards the future and precipitative chains of actions that link the individual to the past” (Jones, 2008:250). R. Scollon, S. Scollon and Jones argue that the historical body is not just a tool to understand how discourses are manifested in our social practices, but also provides insight into the ways the dialectic between discourse and action transforms our discourses and practices, and over time changes the historical body itself. As a result, the historical body is not static or stable, but changes through the dialectic between discourse and action. At these moments of action, past practices and discourses mediate social action while at the same time anticipating future actions. However, as Jones (2008) points out, different, commensurable and incommensurable chains of precipitative and anticipatory action can co-exist in an historical body, and, in some cases even need each other to exist.

For instance, in the classroom the lecturer emphasizes restrictions placed on the use of technology by reiterating rules made at the beginning of the course, but at the same time anticipates that enforcing these rules is potentially going to compromise her authority since the student-teachers will use their smart phones no matter what she does. However, commensurable and incommensurable historical bodies also co-exist at the level of the nexus of practice in interpersonal interaction. S. Scollon (2001) points out that this is often the result of social interaction between people who have socialized into different discourse practices. For instance, the digitally mediated out-of-class learning practices that were observed in chapters 4 and 5 seemed incommensurate with the more traditional learning practices inside the classroom in which the use of smart phones was highly restricted. However, they co-existed since student-teachers suppressed or backgrounded certain discourses in their historical bodies

that formed incommensurate links with their current practices. However, it is at these moments of friction between chains of action or practices where insight can be gained into the dialectic between discourse and action and how and when these practices become part of the historical body (Jones, 2008).

In the case of teacher education, the historical body is an important tool to understand how teaching and learning discourses are formed over time. Student-teachers' accumulated experiences in the classroom as students (e.g., Lorti, 1975), and the experiences they gain as a student-teachers and novice teachers (e.g., Halpern and Hakel, 2003) play an important role in shaping their discourses and practices on learning and teaching.

#### 8.2.2 Becoming an English teacher: anticipatory discourses on future teaching practices

Although past practices and the historical body play important roles in the longer process of becoming a teacher, it is also important to note that discourses on learning and teaching are essentially formulated in anticipation of future outcomes through anticipatory discourses (Kress, 1996). This makes the historical body of the student-teacher or the lecturer an important source of information since it links past discourses on how learning and teaching is done best to present teaching practices.

As I mentioned above, one useful way to look at these links is through the concept of anticipatory discourses, which are discourses on potential future action, or lack of action (Scollon and Scollon, 2000). In chapters 5 and 6 it became clear for instance that student-teachers use digital technology outside the classroom to prepare and practice a limited range of language functions they expect to be used during their own lectures at the university. At the same time, they refrain from preparing for the active use of English for communicative purposes in the classroom since they know that their teachers will use only Thai as the language of instruction instead of English and that the chance is small they will be required to use English in the classroom in unexpected ways.

In the context of teaching and learning, anticipatory discourses are important since the long term world views held by administrators, teachers and learners on issues such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, linguistic background, and gender can include or exclude people from participating in current and future learning trajectories (de Saint-George, 2008; 2012). For instance, in her research on gender in adult education de Saint-George found that long term beliefs of trainers on stereotypical gender role divisions in professions could potentially affect learners' participation in future learning and work trajectories. She argues that these long term beliefs that can positively or negatively affect people's long term futures are more likely to mediate our short term actions than the discourses on learning and teaching recorded in policy documents.

Anticipatory discourses can also provide insight into how actors construct the potentiality of their future actions. Scollon and Scollon (2000) propose that people position themselves toward future action along the lines of agency and knowledge. When these two concepts are mapped out in a matrix, the knowledge axis refers to the actors' beliefs whether a particular predicted action will at one point take place and become reality in the future. The other axis, agency, refers to levels of agency or self-efficacy of the actor to influence or affect the direction of these future actions. Throughout the observations and focus group interviews, anticipatory discourses have been found to provide a rich source of information on the way student-teachers talk about their future actions, not only as student-teachers, but also as future teachers. These anticipatory discourses will be explored in more detail in the following sections.

### 8.3 "I think I will teach in Thai": Anticipatory discourses of student-teachers' English literacy practices in future professional practices

For nonnative speaking English language teachers, it can be argued that the development of their English literacy skills is linked to the professional practices they will engage in after their

graduation. The way in which they currently engage in English literacy practices and the discourses that mediate these practices also provide insight into their anticipations of their future use of English. The vignette below describes how the majority of the student-teachers anticipated how they would use English in the classroom several weeks before they started their one-week teaching practice. This practicum is intended as an orientation to both primary and secondary education and meant to prepare student-teachers for their one-year practicum which follows the year after.

Vignette 6: A discussion among student-teachers on the use of English in the classroom

A group of student-teachers is discussing their teaching practice during one of the focus group interviews. I ask how much English they expect to use in the classroom during their regular teaching. The consensus is that it all depends on the level of their students. At the schools in the city, there might be some students who can say something in English. However, the majority of the schools they are placed at are small, rural schools often without the resources to employ full time qualified English teachers. English classes are sometimes only done by satellite TV if there is no teacher available. They will likely be the only English teachers in their schools, and their students will never use English in their daily lives, as several student-teachers explain. They say they will try to use some English, but the students are weak, and they are adamant that any use of English is going to confuse the students, which will only make their job harder. They believe they will use a combination of Thai mixed with target vocabulary and memorized phrases, such as “open your book”, “students, listen to me”, and, “may I go out, please”. In another group, some student-teachers say they feel they can make a difference and use some English in the classroom. However they expect that it is going to be a real challenge.

The majority of the student-teachers seem to take the anticipated literacy levels of their future students as a deciding factor on how English is going to be used in the classroom and how much. The

major theme that was foregrounded by the student-teachers during the focus group interviews centered on the fact that the use of English in the classroom was impossible and a complicating factor, since their students' language level would be too low to be exposed to English. The student-teachers seemed to think that there was a cut-off point at which the use of English in the classroom was not efficient or functional. As a result, the student-teachers indicated that they would focus mainly on grammar teaching and that only the key vocabulary items to be taught were to be pronounced in English. This cut-off point of the possibility to use English in the classroom was also applied in their own presentations during their classes at the university. During one of the classroom observations student-teachers had to present how they would teach an integrated content and language integrated skills lesson. This concept of integrated learning (TH: บูรณาการ) is not to be confused with the Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach since the local conceptualization is noticeably different. Integrated learning is seen in the current context as teaching a particular topic in the L1 while providing occasional key vocabulary in English. Several groups started off their presentations in English but soon switched back to Thai. During a follow up focus group interview, the groups explained their motivation for switching to Thai as follows.

Excerpt 34. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

55 INT: ok (1.0) so (.) yeah I observed there was very little English (.) being used during the presentations (.) I mean your group started with [English]

56 Jenny: [English] and then summarized in Thai

57 INT: yes

58 Jenny: yes (1.0) because we know that teacher and my classmate (makes gesture to Tian who is sitting next to her) don't understand

This excerpt shows that Jenny and her group decided, in anticipation of the language abilities of their classmates, that their presentation should be conducted largely in Thai since they were afraid that both the lecturer and fellow student-teachers would not be able to understand it. They later also indicated that they were afraid that, if the teachers did not follow their presentation, they would earn a lower grade. Also during teaching practice the student-teachers, including those with lower levels of English language proficiency, anticipated that they would use Thai instead of English. Student-teachers explained that their use of Thai during their teaching practice was done as anticipation to avoid further complicating the already difficult task of teaching English to students at government schools in the provinces in Thailand. In particular for those student-teachers with lower proficiency levels, this is surprising since their own lack of English language proficiency was never mentioned as a reason to teach in Thai. Student-teachers' anticipatory discourses on English literacy events in the classroom then are based on instrumental and pragmatic motives rather than on ideological, pedagogic motives. Although the choice to teach in Thai could be considered as a pedagogical motive since the use of the L1 in classroom teaching potentially scaffolds the English language learning process of the students, this explanation is not evidenced in any of the focus group interviews. Other pedagogical motives could for instance reflect a sense of empowerment or awareness of pedagogical practices in which they could contribute to the development of students' English literacy skills and daily exposure to English. This is of particular interest since in their critique of their language learning experience they identified a lack of communicative activities and a lack of exposure to English inside the classroom as the main cause of their own lack of communicative English literacy skills.

From the previous chapters it became clear that the affordances of digital technology enriched the English language input that student-teachers' are exposed to and provide meaningful opportunities for them to engage in English literacy events. These opportunities, they argued, were scarce in the traditional classroom. However, in the current situation this creates an ambivalence in which student-

teachers' discourse on their own language learning experiences does not actively mediate their anticipated future teaching practices. Instead, the discourse on the anticipated level of English of their future students, and, the socio-geographical location of the school mediate their current learning and future teaching practices. One example of how student-teachers conceptualize the use of English in their future teaching practice, and their anticipations on the use of English, can be found in the excerpt below.

Excerpt 35. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

205 Toey: I think I will use Thai language (.) to teach

206 June: only↑

207 Toey: no [ (1.0) ] {TH: no for vocabulary } but I {TH: explain} I explain (.) use Thai

208 June: [{TH: how}]

209 Nu: oh explain in Thai

210 INT: mmh mhh

211 (4.0)

212 Nu: {TH: yeah like that} (looks at IM)

213 June: {TH: mhh yes like that}

214 Nu: {TH: because if} use Thai (.) the students understand (.) because ehm they this kind Thai people

215 INT: but but do [you] think it will work for them↑ to become good speakers of English↑

216 Nu: [ it ]

217 (7.0)

218 INT: do you think it will work (.) do you think you can teach them well if you use a lot of Thai in the classroom

219 (5.0)

220 Toey: {TH: is it good↑ (1.0) you're asking if it is good↑}

221 Nu: {TH: mmh I'm afraid not good but ehm}

222 Toey: {TH: I'm afraid that the kids will have nothing to rely on (1.0) I'm afraid the kids don't have any support}

223 June: {TH: what do we do↑ (.) how do you say it}

224 Nu: I'm afraid student don't work (.) work (2.0) makes ongoing hand gesture) that we give them}

225 INT: they don't do the activities that you're giving them

This excerpt shows how student-teachers conceptualize the use of English in the classroom as a different mode of presentation, Thai versus English, and not, for instance, a potential of literacy practices part that might be developed alongside other literacy practices. In line 214, Nu explains that she provides the explanation in Thai since the students do not understand it in English, because “they this kind of Thai people” can only understand the explanation in Thai and not in English. With “this kind of Thai people” she refers to the people living in the provinces. With this remark she reaffirms the dominant discourse among both student-teachers and lecturers that in the provinces it is hardly possible for students to be able to speak or understand English. She later adds to this argument in line 224 by saying that if she uses English as the language of instruction, she is afraid that the students will not engage in the tasks set for them which could potentially lead to classroom management problems.

In addition to the lack of understanding, another important theme arises in lines 218 – 223 in which I ask them if they think the use of English is going to benefit the students. They acknowledge that using Thai is not the most effective way of teaching, but they also exhibit low self-efficacy in the skills and didactic techniques to effectively use English in the classroom apart from as a medium to provide

target language structures. June and Toey state in lines 222-223 that their students lack a foundation to build on, and that they, as student-teachers, are in the dark about how to effectively use English beyond as a means of presentation. The contribution below made by one of the student-teachers shows that awareness of techniques to integrate English in the classroom, however, does not necessarily change student-teachers' attitudes or practices.

*“talk English and ↑ do (1.0) and (1.0) act (.) and have a (.) {TH: use} body language {TH: because if I only speak they kids don't understand (.)you have to demonstrate (.) let them watch it to understand (.) like if you translate it into Thai that's the only thing the kids will know (2.0) but I speak Thai}”(Quote line 362 focus group interview 19/11/2015)*

This comment was made by one of the student-teachers and demonstrates that they are aware of the fact that using Thai or translations is not beneficial for the development of their students' English skills. However, she ends her comment by saying that she opted to speak Thai in the end which shows that there is sometimes a discrepancy between the discourses that mediate student-teachers' discussions about teaching and learning and the discourses that mediate their actual teaching practices in the classroom. In addition, this example shows an interesting practice of intra-sentential code-switching in which the student-teacher starts her comment in English and finishes it in Thai. This creates the impression that the level of complexity of the message she is trying to communicate goes beyond her abilities in English or that she does not want to expend the effort to communicate the whole message in English. The latter seems more likely since she was among the students who answered it was easier to speak in Thai, when they were asked later on in the semester why they did not take more advantage of the opportunities that were given to them during the focus group interviews to use English.

The anticipatory discourse evidenced above proved to be relatively stable over time. After the student-teachers returned from a week-long teaching practicum, their ideas about the use of English in the classroom and the use technology in the classroom seemed almost unchanged. The following excerpt is taken from a focus group interview from the same group as in excerpt 2 above.

Excerpt 36. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

365 Toey: {TH: oh first you think oh this is teaching English (.) using English(.) and then you go to the school (.) did it change↑

366 (2.0)

367 Nu: mmh I didn't think that

368 June: {TH: really}

369 Nu: {TH: first I thought I'll speak English but I know the kids from where I come from}

370 Mink: {TH: yeah they're stupid kids and easily confused}

371 June: (laughs) {TH: you don't have to confuse them more}

372 (3.0) (participants are sighing a bit as they don't know how to explain it in English)

373 Toey: {TH: at first I didn't think}

374 Mink: {TH: [at first]}

375 June: {TH: [at first]}

376 Toey: at first I didn't think (1.0) to speak English (2.0) but when [I go to school]

377 Nu: [I go to school] (.) student is  
ehm (.) don't know English [ (.) as well ]

378 Mink: {TH: [not well (.) like that]}

In this excerpt, I asked if their idea about using English in the classroom had changed after their one week practicum. The student-teachers reaffirm their earlier ideas on the use of English in the classroom and the discourse on the anticipated level of the students in the provinces. In lines 369 – 371 Nu, Mink and June justify their pre-existing notions about students' English level by referring to their own experience of being from that particular area. This demonstrates an emerging deficit discourse which in which their developing status as future teachers in Thai society, despite being from the same geographical area, justifies articulating the language deficiencies of their students during the practicum without addressing their own language deficiencies. It seems that their emerging social status in Thai society justifies this comment despite the fact that for these student-teachers communicating in English is still an issue. In the lines following, they even refer to students in an almost ridiculing or derogatory way, as learners who lack the cognitive abilities to follow the teacher in English and should be prevented from being confused even further.

The student-teachers have criticized their university teachers about their authoritarian role in the classroom; however, they adopt a similar authoritarian role in making judgments about their own students. In another focus group, student-teachers voiced a similar discourse, albeit less derogatory, after their teaching practice. The following excerpt is taken from that focus group in which student-teachers generally exhibit higher English proficiency levels than the group before. In a previous focus group interview, they all indicated that the use of English in the classroom was highly dependent on the level of the students. Since they were teaching in the province, they did not expect to use English much in the classroom. In the excerpt below, they were asked if they had used English in the classroom during their teaching practicum.

Excerpt 37. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers.

118 Jenny: (snickers a bit) yes a little

119 INT: a little (.) ok can you say a little bit about that

120 Jenny: mmhh greeting like how are you (.) good morning (.) but the reaction is not that good (.) they do not understand my accent (.) I (.)I(.) I try to speak like really close to a foreigner (.) just like this (.) the result is that they don't understand (.) and (.) and they refuse to do it (.) I mean {TH: they don't ask questions (.) they don't answer the questions (.) they're too shy} (.) they're too shy

121 INT: ok you're saying they're shy (.) or is it that they don't know or:

122 Jenny: oh some word they do know but they don't speak it (.) like some subject I teach conversation for for grade 5 {TH: P five} and (.) and the conversation is kinda easy (.) just follow the pattern that I give them (.) them sentence (.) and then read it and speak it but they do not try it

123 INT: right (.) ok

124 Jenny: they do not want to try it (.) because they're just shy

125 INT: shy ok (.) has anyone else tried to use English for instruction or other things

126 Jan: I only use it when I really want student do something (.) such as (.) divide group (.) group one sit here (.) group two sit here (.) one volunteer come here (.) listen to me (.) quiet

127 INT: ok so the standard sort of (.) things that they (.) and they understand (.) they understand that↑

128 Jan: I use English before (.) Thai {TH: after}

129 INT: ok so you're mixing it (.) with English first and then Thai to explain

130 Jan: (to Bank) {TH: he understands what I'm saying}

131 INT: anyone else↑ (.) have you tried to use English↑

132 Bank: yeah I have tried to use English (2.0) I tried to use English when the sentence answer (.) when I want them to do something (.) some activity (.) or listen to me (.) moreover I use

(.) I use English words when I teach English structure (.) for example I (.) for example when I teach about verb to be (.) I ah: (.) I do not (.) I do not say (.) ok this word is: pronOUNCE↓ (mimics Thai pronunciation) (.) I do not say in Thai (.) when the English teacher teach about English structure (.) they usually say in Thai (.) pronounce in Thai (.) {{TH: like that} (.) I say ok this is a noun (.) pronoun is verb (.) something like that

This excerpt shows that the use of English in the teaching practices of the more proficient student-teachers is similar to that of the other student-teachers. English is used in a limited range of functions such as giving instructions, greetings and providing examples of target language structures. Some also included the vocabulary used to describe features of the language such as “verb”, “noun” and so forth. However, what stands out from the teaching practices described in the excerpts above is that they are also mediated by a deficit discourse in which pre-conceived ideas about students’ language and learning abilities are more dominant than the lived language learning experience that is embedded in the individual historical bodies of the student-teachers. In particular, the statement by Jenny in lines 120 – 122 shows an example of a deficit discourse similar to that described by Valencia and Solórzano (1997), as the inability and unwillingness of her students to use English despite her repeated attempts to make them use the language.

With regard to the student-teachers’ own digital literacy practices they reported that they included only some of their own digital practices into their teaching, such as playing a YouTube video instead of singing a song from a textbook. However these examples were generally scarce. It seems that the digital literacy practices the participants frequently engage in outside the classroom are incommensurate with the teaching practices they engage in inside the classroom. As a result, student-teachers seem to background these digital practices and conform to the dominant discourse on English teaching in Thailand, which generally involves a combination of Present Practice, Produce (PPP) and

grammar-translation methods. In this case, what can be carefully concluded is that student-teachers' anticipatory discourses do not exhibit a sense of agency in which they can integrate the affordances created by their digitally mediated learning practices into their teaching practices. Instead, it seems that students take a more fatalistic stance and form their anticipatory discourses on the knowledge that students' English levels are generally too low and that they will never use English in their lives again. This demonstrates how the discourse on the participants' own learning trajectories is not reproduced in their teaching practices despite the fact that the majority of these students is from the provinces and were able to assume the role of an English teacher by attending low-threshold access education in the city.

#### 8.4 Teaching language and teaching content: Discourses and practices at the lecturer level

Throughout several stages of the nexus analysis it became clear that Thai still has a very prominent role as the medium of instruction on the Bachelor of Education program for English language education. Most of the lecturers on this program indicated that since they are teaching subject courses and not language courses, they refrained from using English. They indicated that the use of English was limited to presenting single words specific to the field, and that Thai was the language of communication. The lecturers on the program made an interesting distinction between the courses that they considered to be subject courses and the language courses. Throughout the interviews and observations they argued that the requirement to teach a lot of theory often forces them to use lecture style classes despite their own preference for using activities as part of their teaching. They often referred to the content of their teaching as "giving knowledge" and "teaching theories" and argued that this was best done in Thai to facilitate comprehension. This was confirmed during the classroom observations with the Thai teachers in which Thai was exclusively used as the medium of instruction. In addition, all instructional materials and handouts were produced in Thai. During several stages of the

nexus analysis, the Thai teachers were asked if they would consider using English as the medium of instruction and they consistently replied that the focus of their teaching was content and not English.

It seems that for this group of lecturers within the department, English literacy events or the use of English, either as the medium of instruction or as the subject of teaching, is not regarded as part of their responsibilities required by the curriculum. The emphasis of their teaching is on knowledge development, or, as one lecturer put it during a presentation on the research findings of this thesis, “we teach content”, while the Language Center and the Foreign Language Department are tasked with the language courses in the curriculum. A similar discourse was observed toward the use of technology as a tool to mediate student-teachers’ learning practices. As argued in chapters 5 and 6, a strong deficit discourse is present on the teachers’ part with regard to the use of digital technology, the teachers arguing that student-teachers’ lacked the digital and information skills to effectively manage the use of digital technology as a tool to mediate their learning.

In chapters 5 and 6, it already became clear that a strong discourse preventing the use of English in the classroom by Thai lecturers resulted in student-teachers’ English literacy practices becoming incommensurate with the dominant literacy practices of the historical space of the Thai classroom. Student-teachers were observed to suppress those English literacy practices that were incommensurate in the nexus of practice in the classroom. This adaptation of student-teachers’ practices and the absence of a discourse emphasizing the role of English as the medium of instruction in teacher training leads to a production of the classroom as a historical space in which English literacy practices are incommensurate with the nexus of practice of becoming a teacher in the context of this Rajabhat university. In addition, the restriction on the use of digital technology as a tool to mediate student-teachers’ learning practices shows a similar trend.

The use of digital technology as a tool to mediate participants’ out-of-class learning practices is part of the individual historical bodies of the student-teachers, but the data suggests that this is

incommensurate with the shared historical body that is formed in the classroom. However, unlike the case of English literacy practices, student-teachers do not change their digitally mediated practices to resolve the tension between the nexus of practice and the student-teachers' individual historical bodies. On the contrary, similar to the practices described in chapter 4, student-teachers do not refrain from using digital technology in the classroom but rather adapt their practices in ways that are not transgressive. In some cases, see chapter 4, excerpt 2 for an example, student-teachers literally adapt the rhythm of their actions to match with the lecturer's actions to create a harmony in which both practices can co-exist at the same time. These adaptations and adjustments result in the production of the classroom as a laminated social space with multiple overlapping and intersecting sites of engagement. These multiple layers of social action are produced as the result of lecturers and student-teachers foregrounding different discourses and practices at these sites of engagement in the classroom. However, this disharmony in foregrounded literacy practices and discourses is not always the norm, and in some cases the lecturers do draw on co-existing English literacy practices and digital tools that are part of student-teachers' historical bodies. The following vignette describes a lecturer's account of her efforts to integrate English literacy practices with didactic and pedagogical skills development.

#### Vignette 7: A senior lecturer describing her teaching experience

One of the senior adjunct teachers on the program sits straight up when we discuss the use of English as the medium of instruction in the classroom during one of the research interviews. "Yeah! Yeah, she starts. When I taught my students last semester, I used English as much as possible, I really tried to use English and they feel quite frustrated. I give them a text you know, a handout, it's still in English and they feel that it's very hard for them to understand, maybe their attitude toward actually reading something in English is..." she pauses for a while and looks around her, "maybe they didn't get used to

it. I said to them, it's a good chance for you to learn to start now to read something in English, it's your major. But then I found out that English is, for half of them, still a problem. We did presentations and teaching activities in English and they couldn't teach in English. Maybe they give some simple instructions but they can't even use it correctly even though I have already taught them about classroom English".

In this vignette, the lecturer recounts her teaching experience from the semester prior to the start of the data collection with the same group of student-teachers participating in this research. Her account provides a perspective on the student-teachers' English literacy practices in the classroom when digitally mediated learning practices and English literacy events are actively foregrounded as part of the medium of instruction. In chapters 5 and 6, I argued that most of the English literacy practices in the classroom are prepared and practiced literacy events in which student-teachers draw on a repertoire of familiar and practiced language functions. The first observation that stands out in her account is that her teaching and learning practices in the classroom deviate from the discourses in the department. Ajarn D foregrounds her own discourses on teaching and learning which include the integration of English literacy practices as an integrated part of the didactic and pedagogical skills development of the student-teachers. In her teaching, she follows a situated literacies approach in which she addresses those specific classroom English literacy events such as giving instructions in English, presenting new vocabulary in English and reading information in English that they, as aspiring teachers, might come across in the classroom.

However, despite complaints about the lack of opportunities to practice English in the classroom, active integration of the use of English in learning and teaching seems to create friction and frustration on behalf of the student-teachers. This frustration is most likely grounded in the fact that normally the student-teachers will have an alternative to using English. For instance, with foreign

teachers, people like Jenny will function as a translator and interpreter which allows other, less proficient, student-teachers to wait until the translation is provided. In other cases, student-teachers can draw on practiced and routine-based literacy practices to engage in these classroom literacy events. What this then demonstrates is that student-teachers' discourses and practices in the classroom with a Thai lecturer are firmly grounded in a shared historical body. In contrast with earlier observations in chapter 6 when student-teachers' historical bodies were incommensurate with the practices that produced the historical space of the classroom, here, the demands placed by the lecturer on the literacy practices she would like the student-teachers to engage in are seen as transgressive. The demands that Ajarn D places on the use of English in the classroom is also noted and reported by the student-teachers. Excerpt 5 below includes a remark made as part of a discussion between student-teachers that followed my question of whether they were at all interested in learning how to teach using English as the medium of instruction. Their first reaction was that no one taught these didactic skills or used English as the medium of instruction in the classroom except the foreign teachers.

Excerpt 38. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

965 June: {TH: except for the foreign teachers}

966 Toey: {TH: and with Ajarn D}

967 Nu: {TH: yes}

968 June: D (.) D (pronounces the full name in a mocking way)

969 Toey: speak English always

970 INT: she is quite strict about that right {TH: she requires everyone to use English in the classroom}

971 Toey: oh no

972 June: {TH: yeah she requires it and demands it}

973 Mink: if I say in Thai (.) she can't (.) she {TH: she doesn't answer and doesn't listen}

This brief excerpt evidences how little English is used as the medium of instruction by the Thai teachers and how it is met with frustration (lines 968, 971 – 972) when it is used by Ajarn D. It also shows how students-teachers' use of Thai and frequent intrasentential code-switching are ignored by her. This forces the student-teachers to actively engage in these English literacy events and actively and creatively produce English instead of drawing on memorized and practiced phrases. This is a practice which is seemingly not well-embedded in the student-teachers' historical bodies. This situation illustrates how those literacy events in the classes of Ajarn D that potentially contribute to the development of student-teachers' English literacy skills are considered to be incommensurate with the historical space created by her Thai colleagues. In addition to the use of English in the classroom, Ajarn D is one of the few teachers who will allow student-teachers to use digital technology as a tool to search for supplementary information online. The following excerpt followed a discussion on the learning materials that student-teachers were given in the classroom. Student-teachers indicated that they only received printed out PowerPoint presentations in the form of a handout and occasional worksheets.

Excerpt 39. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

552 INT: mmh mmh and do they give you extra information online where you can look for more information or is it only the powerpoint

553 Noi: no

554 May: no

555 An: {TH: no}

556 Cherry: worksheet

557 (1.0)

558 May: {TH: only Ajarn D who let us look online and find extra information}

559 An: have only Ajarn D

560 All: only

The active use of digital technology in the classroom was also confirmed by other focus groups and Ajarn D herself who indicated that she integrated it as part of the teaching and learning practices in her classroom. She indicated that she actively taught digital and information literacy skills to make sure that student-teachers would be able to utilize these online resources. Despite Ajarn D's initial concerns about the student-teachers' reactions to her teaching, these teaching practices and the use of English as the medium of instruction and learning resonate well with some student-teachers and result in active application of these skills.

Student-teachers for instance explained during the focus group interviews that they were recycling a lot of course materials of teaching activities in English used during Ajarn D's course for their own use during their one-week teaching practice. These activities were often mentioned as part of the activities used in the classroom for peer teaching practice as well as for use in their one-week teaching practicum. In addition, student-teachers also responded that they were following up on her suggestions to find and learn vocabulary in English instead of relying on the Thai translation as evidenced in excerpt 7 below.

Excerpt 40. A transcript from a focus group interview with the student-teachers

475 Tik: yes Darett (.) Ajarn Darett she suggest me err::

476 An: to find new vocabulary meaning in English

Student-teachers started using English – English online dictionaries after this was suggested by Ajarn D and demonstrated by her in the classroom. These instances of English literacy events that student-teachers foreground during the focus group interviews show that a different discourse on the use of English in the classroom can result in the active use of English as part of their English literacy events. By actively integrating these English literacy practices in the classroom and building on student-teachers' existing digital practices and tools, instead of restricting the use of these tools, these practices will be foregrounded and cycle through more sites of engagement and link social spaces that are produced as part of these sites of engagement.

Although Ajarn D's teaching practices were initially met with frustration, the alternative discourse on engaging in digital English literacy practices as part of the classroom learning the participants engage in, allowed the creation of meaningful links between those shorter in-class digital literacy events and the digital English literacy events that take place on longer time scales outside the classroom. However, where the examples above make meaningful connections with literacy practices outside the classroom, there is little evidence in the data of links being made with English literacy practices during teacher practice. Only relatively late in the program, during the last year and a half of study, do student-teachers get the opportunity to participate in two one-week teaching practice placements at a local school. This is followed by a full year of teaching practice. The teaching practicum has great potential to provide participants with the opportunity to engage in situated English literacy practices in the classroom as part of their didactic skills development.

However, the student-teachers stated that their experience of using English in the classroom during peer teaching practice sessions was substantially different from the use of English in the classroom. A lot of student-teachers built on the shared knowledge and comprehension of stereotypical classroom activities used during peer teaching practice. As a result, their explanations and instructions, although often inaccurate and unclear, were easily understood by their peers and everyone cooperated

in the classroom to make these practice moments a success. However, during teaching practice at the schools, very few of the students were able to understand and actively engage in these English literacy events. Due to a lack of alternatives, student-teachers often chose to draw on a repertoire of practiced phrases and simple instructions that students were already familiar with. As a result, the English literacy events that both student-teachers and their students engage in during teaching practice remain limited to those practiced phrases that are already firmly embedded in their historical bodies and the content that is taught during the lessons.

#### 8.5 Access to education, managing resources and gatekeeping: discourses at the University level

The university as an institution fulfills several important educational and gatekeeping functions. The university in this research is part of a larger framework of Rajabhat Universities, a type of low cost community college, which provide non-entrance test admission to higher education for students in the provinces. Students who have finished their high school exams and passed their ANET tests will be allowed admission to undergraduate programs. All these factors create a complex intersection of discourses and practices in formulating educational policies and objectives while fulfilling the gatekeeping functions of an institute of higher education. For instance, the fact that Rajabhat Universities do not require an admissions test means students have a wide variety of skill levels and abilities upon admission. However, the University must also ensure that all these students with varying levels of ability graduate with a minimally required level of ability in their field of study as well as in the general education courses of which English is a core subject. The university needs to negotiate this tension between entrance levels and exit scores by providing education within constraints on human and financial resources. However, it must also do this within the context of the learning and social practices of their students in an increasingly digitally mediated society. Due to the low salaries for teaching staff and faculty, large class sizes and the level of education it provides, Rajabhat universities

often cannot attract the highest qualified teachers, and the teachers they employ need to work within the limitations of the facilities and resources available.

#### 8.5.1 Discourses on Digital Technology

Excerpt 41 Quote taken from a research interview with the vice-president

'By the time that the committee comes and checks, yes, more than 80% of the teachers use IT in the classroom but in reality, still I don't know how many teachers do that but I think that everyone already knows that the IT world has already come. You can ask the students to use IT in the classroom. You can ask the students to use your digital learning environment outside the classroom. The university gives a lot of room to the teachers.'

The quote above provides insight into the discourses and the practices with regard to the policies and the educational management practices of the administration of the university. The situation described in the quote demonstrates the existing tension between the policies that are formulated and, the actual teaching and learning practices in the classroom. At the university level, policies generally exhibit a positive orientation toward the use of technology and English in the classroom. The vice president indicated that the university's policies provide a lot of room for teachers to use technology in the classroom and that the teachers can require the use of technology outside the classroom. In addition, it seems like the vice-president is aware of the role of the student-teachers' digital practices. During the interview, he made active reference to digital practices student-teachers engaged in based on his own observations from around the campus or from his own teaching experience. The university is, according to the vice-president, not only encouraging the use of technology in the classroom, but has

also taken action over the last two decades to provide the infrastructure for teachers and students to engage in these practices.

Examples of these initiatives to improve the facilities are the self-access language learning and testing center, access to computers for students and the recently added zones with wireless internet access to the existing facilities. The majority of the classrooms, outdoor areas in the proximity of the buildings and some special Wireless Internet Areas provide access to wireless internet. The university has also recently started promoting the use of an online learning management system (Google Education). However, despite the ample facilities that teachers are given to use technology, digital tools are still mostly used to perform traditional teaching practices such as lecturing using PowerPoint slides, communicating with students using email or Facebook groups, or presenting audio-visual materials through computers. These practices are different from the digitally mediated literacy practices that the student-teachers engage in which, rather than reproducing analog practices, broaden the range of actions they can take.

However, despite this discrepancy between discourse, practices and the use of digital technology, teachers do not hesitate to give student-teachers homework assignments that require more enhanced applications of technology such as the PowToon video discussed in Chapter 4. From that particular case it became clear that teachers set homework tasks which require the use of a range of digital practices which are not taught as part of the course content for that particular course. In addition, it turned out that the lecturers were not able to produce a PowToon video themselves, and were only able to show an existing prepared example to the class as the input for digital literacy skills development. Friction then, arises when the digital literacy skills that are needed to engage in these homework assignments are not effectively taught, or not taught at all.

However, despite the absence of digital skills development as part of their regular teaching practices, teachers still foreground the use digital technology in their discourses on teaching and

learning in semiotic artifacts that are presented to the university administration such as official evaluation reports, course descriptions, curricula and personal interaction with other teachers. This creates the impression at the university administrative level that their policies are grounded in the individual teaching practices at the classroom level, whereas in reality a different discourse mediates the actual teaching practices in the classroom. Tangible course outcomes in the form of digital semiotic artifacts such as the Powtoon videos further evidence these discourses on digital literacy development at the classroom level, even though these are digital practices that are developed *in spite* of the teaching taking place (rather than because of it) and are often the result of student-teachers' own digital literacy practices.

#### 8.5.2 Discourses on Learning and teaching

A similar discrepancy between discourse and practices can be observed with regard to the professional development the university provides to establish a paradigm shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered teaching and learning. This paradigm shift is required as part of the education reform phase that Thailand is currently in and will be discussed in more detail below. In order to make the shift to a more learner-centered paradigm, the university has adopted a policy of promoting the use of an active-learning pedagogy and has provided a budget for a number of teachers per year to be trained. This professional development is done with partners abroad in English speaking countries in order to provide teachers with exposure to the English language as well.

A number of teachers from both the Foreign Language Department and the Faculty of Education attended both the professional development program in Thailand, as well as the English language training component in for instance, Montana, US, Singapore, Malaysia and Hong Kong over the last ten years. However, very few of these initiatives have resulted in observable changes in classroom teaching. During the research interviews the majority of the lecturers mentioned 'active learning' as their preferred approach to learning and teaching. However, it seems that individual teachers have different

understandings of what 'active learning' means and how it can be realized in teaching and learning practices. As a result, individual teachers develop their own discourse on active learning and the use of this approach in learning and teaching. One of the participants on the training program, Ajarn D, described the different interpretations of active learning as follows.

Excerpt 42. Excerpt taken from a research interview

43 DN: you know like er:: OK at this moment I do like one research (.) about drop out but I'm thinking about after I finish this project I do like to try to study teachers' believe about active learning cause this is the policy of my university and I feel like maybe the (1.) the their idea may be different on their interpretation and (1.0) and maybe it is quite similar to the result I got from my PhD thesis but I'm not quite sure

44: (1.0)

45 INT: but do you think there is a widespread sort of interpretation [of the ]

46 DN: [ yeah yeah even even the word active too I don't know if they understand like different teachers they can maybe interpret the word active differently (1.0) their view about the word active

47 INT: right (.) because is it (.) when they talk about it in Thai do they use the word active learning or the Thai translation of it

48 DN: I think we all use active

49 INT: right

50 DN: because in Thai word it's quite (.) I don't know for me I quite feel like in order to translate (.) translate the word active it's quite hard

As Ajarn D indicates in the extract, the Thai equivalents of words like 'active' and 'activity' in the context of active learning are hard to describe. This leaves a lot of room for interpretation of the actual concept if the meaning in English is not fully understood during the workshops due to general low levels of English language proficiency among the teaching staff. This variation in the conceptualization of active learning is partly due to the interpretation of the word 'active', which is used as a loan word in Thai in this particular context without having a clear counterpart in Thai. Similarly, the concept of an 'activity' in Thai education usually takes the shape of a rather rigid, practiced performance instead of a more open-ended experiential activity.

In addition, this excerpt also provides insight into the discrepancies between the discourses on teaching and learning and the actual classroom practices. Ajarn D indicates that discourses on active learning mediating the ways in which they talk about their teaching practices are different from the discourses that mediate their actual teaching practices during classes, teaching practice, and so forth. She referred to her PhD research, conducted at the same faculty, to point out that this discrepancy was also found between discourses on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) formulated by the teacher educators, student-teachers, and administrators at the Faculty of Education and how these discourses were substantially different from how it was conceptualized into practices in lectures, handouts and teaching practices.

Based on the observations and interviews conducted in this study, this discrepancy between discourse and practice seems to result from the fact that teachers foreground a discourse of active learning in discussions on their teaching practices, whereas the actual teaching practices in the classroom are mediated by a different set of more traditional discourses on teaching and learning which are firmly embedded in the teachers' individual historical bodies. For instance, the majority of the teachers who participated in this research indicated that having students engage in activities in the classroom constitutes active learning to them. Two teachers summed it up as follows.

Excerpt 43. Excerpt taken from a research interview

108 lecturer 1: we have to plan a lesson and (1.5) put active learning (.) learning activity in our  
[lesson plan] in class

109 Lecturer2: [ class yeah ]

110 Lecturer1: errr the difference between traditional and active learning (1.0) yes

111 INT: OK (.) and did you see a difference (.) a big difference

112 Lecturer1: yes (.) active when they learn work together with their friends (.) and they (.) active

In this extract, the teachers conceptualize the idea of active learning as the integration of activities in their lesson plan that the students do after a moment of instruction by the teacher. This is done, as they explained later, to make sure that learners do not only passively listen to lecturers, which is seen as a characteristic of 'traditional learning'. They argue (line 112) that the success of this method is evidenced by the level of activity of the students while participating in these activities. Later on in the interview one of the teachers explains that these activities help students practice and apply what they have just been taught in that lesson. She explained that

“sometimes we must have lecture (.) but active will help us when we (.) want them to practice what we have taught to them (.) so active” (Line 124, research interview Lecturer1 and 2).

Her remark aligns with earlier comments made by other teachers from the department that their principal function is to teach “knowledge and content” and that lectures are an inevitable part of this. The activities they have included in their teaching have the function of getting the students to practice skills development and checking their comprehension. This is different from the original conceptualization of active learning which emphasizes experiential learning in which the students engage in higher order thinking skills activities which allow them to assume ownership over the learning

process and go beyond the level of understanding and remembering factual information (Bonwell and Eison, 1991). In this approach to active learning, 'active' refers to engaging in learning practices at higher levels of cognitive activity instead of participating in the activities that the Thai teachers refer to, which focus mainly on the regurgitation of previously lectured content.

### 8.5.3 Discourses on English Literacy practices

The university requires all students enrolled in undergraduate programs to achieve a minimum requirement in English through the ELLIS self-access study program. In addition, all students have to complete the required English proficiency courses that are part of the 9 credits assigned to the 'language and communication' section of the general education curriculum. In reality, this means that students attend three courses in English language proficiency over the course of four years of study. Student-teachers majoring in English are required to take another 68 credits of English language related courses. The majority of these courses focus on the development of meta-linguistic knowledge such as English phonetics, syntax and grammar. Other courses include proficiency development courses and courses that focus on the use of English in classroom teaching. The most prominent discourse that is foregrounded by the university administration with regard to English language proficiency development is that the role of English has become very important after recent initiatives to extend the collaboration between ASEAN member states of which Thailand is a founding member. As a result, the imminent start of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) requires English as the medium of communication between citizens of the member states.

The majority of the student-teachers, for instance, mentioned ASEAN as a reason why English is important for Thai citizens. They demonstrated an awareness of the potential of English for social mobility within the ASEAN community and the potential that visa-free travel rules create for opportunities to use English. Teachers at the Faculty of Education have mentioned ASEAN frequently as

one of the main reasons why English language education is important. However, very few teachers were able to give examples of how this might affect the students' daily use of English. The university administration indicated that English as a medium of communication in the ASEAN community is going to become more important for both teachers and student-teachers. For the teachers, improved English skills would provide access to opportunities for professional development. Higher levels of English language proficiency would allow teachers to interact better with field related publications in English and participate in workshops conducted in English by experts outside Thailand. In addition, the university stressed the importance of the development of English language skills as part of providing better and more English language education at the university. This would, according to the vice-president make the use of English on campus a more accepted practice, and, improve student-teachers' abilities to use English effectively in their future teaching practice.

In addition to the professional development initiatives, the vice-president also indicated that the university would like to improve the English skills of the teaching staff and students in order to be better able to teach English and engage in English literacy events in the classroom. The university administration seems to be well aware that being able to recruit teacher educators with high levels of English proficiency would have a positive effect on the development of the English proficiency skills of the student-teachers as well. The following quote is taken from an interview with the vice president where he describes the situation at the university with regard to English language development.

Excerpt 44: Quote taken from a research interview with the vice-president

"If we could teach in English, it would be different from other universities. Because we all know that lecturers at the faculty of education, if we could ask or recruit the lecturer who have ability to do that, it would be great for the outcome, it would be good and accepted worldwide. Even in our country we need teachers who speak English very well, we need that. If we could organize

this curriculum, that conducts classes in English, of course the product of our curriculum will be English teachers, future English teachers, who can speak English well in the future. That would be a good outcome, a good product that we would like to put in for our nation. We would like to have that and in the near future we will try to. And even now we need the English curriculum, but even now, as you know, it's very difficult to go and talk to them and say you have to use English. Very difficult! You have to accept that now, the input, I mean the teacher, they haven't got the experience in other countries before, especially the native speaking countries, especially in English, so they haven't got that so it's very difficult of course for them as well to use English all the time except the one who used to be in other countries and used English. So it's very difficult to get them to use English in the classroom but the president, and even I myself, of course I'm sure that the dean or the deputy dean would urge the curriculum and the lecturers in that curriculum to conduct that class in English but it's very difficult to check, it's like an ideal model. “

This quote demonstrates how the administration identifies the benefits of improved English proficiency skills for the future of the student-teachers graduating from this university. The vice-president does not only indicate that this is a necessary step toward better learning outcomes, but also reveals how this would be different from the practices at other universities in Thailand. The vice-president foregrounds an anticipatory discourse of an ideal model of English medium instruction. He repeatedly emphasizes this potential and the necessity of these changes in order to improve the learning outcomes and the quality of the graduates and future teachers. However, at the same time, he foregrounds a discourse of fatalism downplaying the university's potential to realize this ideal model due to a lack of human resources and the absence of institution wide support for English Medium Instruction. This discourse of fatalism further demonstrates the tension between the educational

ideologies formulated at the university administration level, the constraints on the available teaching resources, and, the widespread variation in language and academic competence of students upon enrolling in the university.

Besides the tension between discourses and practices, the vice-president made another important point by indicating that even for the university administration to check the actual teaching practices in the classroom is not always possible. This adds to the existing tension between the discourses that mediate the curriculum and quality assurance documentation on how teaching takes place in the classroom and how these discourses are reproduced in actual teaching practices in the classroom. This tension also results in different constructions of the classroom as a social space. The practices and discourses intersecting at sites of engagement during learning and literacy events construct one notion of the classroom as a social space. These social spaces are lived and produced by the teachers and the student-teachers. However, at the same time, the discourses and practices that describe learning and teaching practices and produce semiotic artifacts such as official curricula and quality assurance documentation construct the classroom as an alternative, almost imagined social space.

The concept of an imagined social space here can be compared to Said's imagined geographies and Anderson's imagined communities in which people perceive a space or a community on the basis of the artifacts that represent these spaces and communities. In the current case, a number of semiotic artifacts are produced by the teachers in the form of official documents for quality assurance and curriculum purposes which construct a particular ideal image of the teaching and learning practices taking place in the classroom. This issue of how the ideologies on education set out by the university were reflected in official documentation, but not reproduced in actual practices, was put to the vice president as well. He explained that the Thai Ministry of Education has implemented an improved set of quality assurance tools, which are not limited to the faculty and university level anymore, but also

evaluate practices at the curriculum implementation level in the classroom. However, despite this deeper level of quality assurance, the university administration still seems dependent on discourses that mediate official documentation on learning and teaching in the classroom such as curricula, syllabi, and quality assurance documentation instead of the actual discourses that are foregrounded in the classroom. In other words, the university administration seems to accept a view of the classroom as an imagined space produced by the discourses and semiotic artifacts that are recorded in the official documentation.

The vice-president indicated that he was aware this discrepancy existed based on his interviews and interactions with student-teachers and graduates, but he felt that the administrative culture, the tension between the availability of qualified teachers and the desired learning outcomes, and, the widespread variation in entrance levels of students, prevented the university administration from sufficiently addressing this problem. The degree of acceptance of this discrepancy is mentioned by Lao (2015) as well. In her work on borrowed western education policies and their implementation in Thailand, she describes how Thai administrators and practitioners are comfortable with the existing ambivalence between the ways education policies are represented in dominant Discourses and the actual teaching and learning practices in the classroom.

#### 8.6 Failed education reform, decentralization and deficit discourse: Discourses and practices at the ministerial level

Under the current structure of the Thai Ministry of Education (MOE), the Rajabhat Universities fall under the supervision of the Office of the Higher Education Commission in a special commission called the Udom Sueksa Commission and the Council of Rajabhat University Presidents. This commission operates under the umbrella of the regulations of the MOE. For this thesis, contact with officials within the ministry was established via a network of connections since direct contact with the ministry is

extremely complex and hard to achieve. Ministry officials are generally hard to contact and attempts to correspond with the ministry were left unanswered. The Udom Sueksa Commission was approached but did not respond to any of the requests for interviews either. Therefore, the views, discourses and practices that are discussed here come from two senior officials within the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) who are responsible for the strategic analysis of education policies and teacher training at the secondary and primary level. The OBEC forms an important part of the MOE and has, due to the large number of students it represents, a strong presence. Both officials agreed to participate and allowed their views to be summarized but asked not to be directly quoted. Although the views from this interview do not provide a direct insight into the discourses and practices of the Rajabhat universities at the ministerial level, it does create a better understanding of the relationship between teacher education and the field in which these future teachers are going to be working.

Both senior officials are actively involved in providing in-service teacher training and frequently visit schools. According to them the main emphasis of the MOE was the need for improved English skills at all levels ranging from primary school teachers and students to university level teacher educators and student-teachers. Here as well the main reason cited for this need to improve English proficiency levels was the imminent start of the ASEAN Economic Community. In addition, they mentioned that English provided an important tool to actively engage in academic and digital learning practices. However, they indicated that research by the ministry found that the current standards of English language were not sufficient for both students and teachers to participate in these practices. With specific reference to the Rajabhat Universities they argued that these institutes produced high numbers of graduates with generally low standards of English and didactic skills. Both officials felt that when they came across graduates from these institutes during their school visits, they could not perform at the levels that the MOE stipulated.

As has been argued throughout this chapter, this deficit discourse is found at every level of Thai society. This starts with student-teachers complaining about their teachers and peers not having adequate English proficiency skills which, they claim, hampers their own academic development. At the same time, teacher educators claim their student-teachers do not have adequate English skills to perform in basic academic and classroom English literacy events. The university administration argues that it is unable to recruit qualified teachers as faculty members at the Rajabhat universities to provide better language education for student-teachers and provide more content instruction in English. At the MOE, officials claim that that student-teachers and lecturers at the Rajabhat Universities do not have the required English and pedagogical skills to perform according to the standards set out by the MOE.

This deficit discourse is also seen in media representations of education in Thailand. National newspapers and websites consistently report on the lack of English proficiency of primary and secondary school students, student-teachers, English teachers, and lecturers. The main reasons cited for this lack of English language proficiency are the failed paradigm shift from teacher centered to learner-centered teaching methods, a failed education reform, and, a lack of opportunities for people to actively use the language in real life. These reasons cited in the newspaper articles are in most cases statements quoted from MOE officials or educational experts from the larger research universities in Bangkok. These discourses, however, can be traced back and linked to the data at various levels of this nexus analysis and were also confirmed by the officials of the OBEC during the research interview. These three reasons mentioned above will be discussed in more detail below and analyzed to what extent the dominant discourse at the ministerial level is grounded in the practices at each level.

First of all, the failed paradigm shift to a more learner-centered approach was evident in several observations. Chapters 5 and 6 described that the way in which student-teachers were taught followed a highly teacher-centered approach. Teachers on the program emphasized the need to teach a lot of theory and content and demanded student-teachers' full attention during their teaching. During some

observations a more learner-centered approach was evidenced but the majority of the learning observed in the classroom involved a more teacher-centered approach which required little to no participation from the student-teachers. The student-teachers also followed a more teacher-centered approach in their peer teaching practice sessions. The majority of the peer-teaching practice moments observed involved highly regulated, teacher-led learning activities. In these learning activities, the English instructions provided to the class involved mostly practiced and formulaic phrases with hardly any creatively produced language.

The MOE have organized a range in-service teacher training programs and the curriculum requirements were adapted and reformulated to reflect this shift as well during the 1999, 2001, and 2008 educational reforms. However, when the issue was put to the officials from the MOE on how curriculum development and educational reform at the primary and secondary education level were integrated and reflected in the curricula of the teacher training programs they admitted that there was hardly any communication between the commissions. The Rajabhat Universities and the overarching Udom Suksa commission need to actively keep up to date with these changes and incorporate them into their own teacher education curricula.

Although a reference framework is given on the expected learning outcomes for teachers by other organizations such as the teaching licensing body within the MOE, the now temporarily defunct Teaching Council Thailand (TCT), it remains the responsibility of the Udom Suksa commission and the local universities to integrate these reforms and learning outcomes into their own learning curricula. It seems that not only the communication between the partners within the ministry of education is problematic, but also that the actual implementation of this shift into the B.Ed English curriculum has been unsuccessful. An analysis of the course descriptions provided in the B.Ed. curriculum demonstrates a lack of references made to student-centered learning. The vice-president argued that the interaction between the B.Ed. programs and the OBEC is limited to the contact the student-teachers have with the

schools and the teachers during teaching practice and further employment after graduation. This means that student-teachers are only getting exposed to the discourses and practices that represent educational reform once they are in the classroom, and not as part of their education at the teacher education level. In addition to this disconnect between pre-service teacher training and the actual teaching practices, the current literature (cf Forman, 2005; Kantamara, Hallinger & Jatiket, 2006; Nonkukhetkhong, Baldauf and Mori, 2010, Nutravong, 2002) also suggest that that this paradigm shift still has not taken place at the primary and secondary school level. These findings suggest that the larger discourses on educational reform, as they are reflected in semiotic artifacts like the Basic Core Curriculum, the B.Ed. English Curriculum, training programs, policies and so forth, are not mediating the teaching practices in the classroom for both the pre-service teacher education that is provided and the English language teaching taking place by their staff and student-teachers.

In addition to this failed shift in teaching paradigms, a failed central policy of decentralization was mentioned at the ministerial level as another issue responsible for the current state of English language education in Thailand. Originally, this policy aimed to decentralize the Bangkok school curriculum and provide a curriculum that was based on the local teaching and learning needs identified in the provinces. Educational reform policies therefore aimed at formulating more generic curriculum outcomes in the form of learning strands. These strands could then be implemented and adopted by individual schools in a localized and contextualized school-based curriculum. However, according to both officials from the MOE, this policy has not been successful since administrators and educators in the provinces lack the curriculum development skills to adapt and integrate these more generic learning strands in a school-based curriculum. They mentioned that although by now “by the document it says we should be decentralized” in practice the schools in the provinces are still not ready for this. Based on their own experience from school visits in the provinces they found that directors and administrators cited similar reasons for the failed decentralization: A lack of qualified teachers, infrastructure, time to

attend in-service teacher training for teachers at small schools and a lack of budget withheld access to these opportunities for professional development.

In order to facilitate better access to professional development of local English teachers, the MOE has launched several initiatives to allow teachers to choose where they attend in-service teacher training. Although this provides wider access to more localized forms of professional development, it also shifts the responsibility of the provision of in-service teacher training to local institutions such as the university participating in this research. As a result, in-service teacher training is mediated by the same discourses and practices that have been identified as partly contributing to the existing problems in the classroom. In addition, the MOE officials indicated that they are piloting forms of distance learning in which model schools in Bangkok were videoed and shown as a sample of good educational practice to schools in the provinces. Although this improves access to opportunities for professional development, the models of teaching and learning demonstrated in the videos reinforce the idea of a centralized model of the development of teaching and learning in the country.

Finally, the lack of opportunities to use the English language was cited as another reason for the low level of English language proficiency in Thailand. Despite the positive anticipatory discourses on ASEAN, and the high number of tourists that visit the country every year, it seems that beyond the tourist industry, the exposure to English is perceived to be low. However, the data within this thesis has already shown how student-teachers' digital English literacy practices substantially increase their exposure to English. However, it seems that these digital literacy practices are only prioritized at the individual learner and student-teacher level and the university administration level but not at the ministerial level. The MOE has piloted various projects such as the One Tablet per Child Project, the Smart Classroom, and, various other initiatives. However, the officials indicated that the projects did not positively affect learning and teaching in the classroom and teachers would generally only enhance or replace some of their teaching practices with ineffective applications of digital technology. Other

reasons cited for the lack of priority given to technology in learning and teaching included a lack of funds for the rural schools, and, a lack of ICT and digital literacy skills on behalf of the teachers to implement technology in their teaching and learning. At a more general level, decentralization and the development of basic didactic and pedagogical skills for teachers were prioritized.

The discourse on the use of technology, however, seems to view digital technology as an optional tool which is potentially disruptive in the classroom but fails to take into account that a number of digital literacy practices already co-exist alongside other practices in the classroom as demonstrated in chapters 5 and 6. This view on the role of technology in learning and teaching neglects the pedagogical potential of these digital English literacy practices for learning and teaching in the classroom. However, these discourses on the assumed ineffectiveness of technology in learning teaching are also the discourses that mediate the production of semiotic artifacts such as educational policies, the content of in-service teacher training, and, potentially the role of technology in future educational reform. Since these artifacts originate from the MOE, they carry a sense of legitimacy and direct how teaching and learning is carried out in the classroom. As a result, backgrounding the role of digitally mediated English literacy practices potentially reinforces the existing discourse on the use of technology in teaching and learning at the teacher education level. In addition, these discourses mediate how technology is seen within the pedagogical and didactic courses that inform student-teachers' future teaching practices. This further reduces the chance that the digital English literacy practices that are embedded in student-teachers' historical bodies are foregrounded in the classroom at the university or are actively encouraged to be applied in the English language classroom in future professional teaching practices.

## 8.7 Conclusion

This chapter has described how discourses on digital English literacy practices, and digitally mediated learning and teaching practices cycle through various levels of society and how the discourses at one level are grounded in the practices at another level. This happens, for instance, in the form of educational policies or ideologies such as the discourse on English and the ASEAN community. In other cases these discourses are represented in semiotic artifacts such as course assignments such as the video project. As these discourses cycle through moments of action, they are resemiotized in different modalities, from spoken interaction to written documentation such as quality assurance documentation and written announcements, or multimodal artifacts such as an instructional video. However, most notable in this linkage between discourses is the strong presence of a deficit discourse. Deficit thinking (Gorsky, 2011) or deficit ideology (Valencia and Solórzano, 1997) was found at all levels of interaction within the larger process of English literacy development for both teacher education and language education in Thailand. This deficit discourse is manifested in the discourse practices and anticipatory discourses the student-teachers, teachers and administrators engage in to enact identities as figures of authority that in Thai society are typically associated with certain levels of knowledge and skills. By engaging in certain discourse practices they enact an identity through which they emphasize differences in learning abilities, socio-geographical and socio-economic backgrounds of students as if they were deficiencies. In the context of learning and teaching practices, these deficit discourses foreground teachers' perceptions of students' weaknesses rather than their strengths and anticipate these weaknesses in their approach to teaching and learning (Gorsky, 2011; Valencia and Solórzano, 1997). Articulating differences as deficiencies in the context of learning and teaching has been reported in a wide body of research (Cf. Gee, 2008; Street, 1984, 1993). This research has created a better understanding of how schools and education systems approach differences in learning and literacy practices and the ways in which teachers, administrators and policy makers believe these differences are

evidenced in limited literacy, intellectual abilities and linguistic limitations. As part of socializing into the role of a teacher in Thai society, a number of differences are foregrounded and become more articulated and these differences might influence how the student-teachers view their future students. The deficit discourses that were found in this chapter were grounded in the articulation of social-geographical and socio economic differences. Most notable were the social-geographical divisions. The affordances for social mobility provided by low-threshold access to education in the city created the opportunity for student-teachers from the provinces to socialize into the role of an authority position as a teacher in Thai society. However, it is exactly this access to low-threshold education which further articulates these perceived differences and deficiencies between the provinces and the city. For the student-teachers who originally come from the provinces, and, who will be returning there to teach, these difference will be more articulated than for others.

## Chapter 9: Discussion and Conclusion

### 9.1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis was to create a better understanding of the ways digital technology affects English literacy practices outside the classroom and how these digital English literacy practices relate to English language learning and teaching that take place inside the classroom. I started this thesis with the general observation that an increasing number of learners engage in various digital English literacy practices to find opportunities to use the English language in environments in which this exposure to English is otherwise scarce. I set out to study this phenomenon within the context of teacher education in Thailand, addressing the specific question of how the student-teachers' use of digital technology affects their English language learning outside the classroom, and what the pedagogical potential of these practices might be for learning and teaching in the classroom. This chapter will summarize the findings from the analytical chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8 in terms of my theoretical framework, and, answer the research questions formulated in chapters 2 and 3. It will also discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions this study makes to the field of Mediated Discourse Analysis.

I will start the discussion of the findings by briefly restating the three research questions that were formulated at the beginning of this thesis.

1. What are the digital literacy practices of Thai student-teachers, the discourses mediating these practices and the tools they use to engage in these practices and how does the intersection of these practices, discourses and tools allow student-teachers to create networks of relations between produced social spaces?
2. How have the digital literacy and language learning practices of these student-teachers been shaped, transformed and linked to other practices and what is the pedagogical potential of these practices for the use of teaching and learning in the classroom in particular?

3. How do the individual beliefs of the Thai-student-teachers on the role of digital technology in learning and literacy practices link and relate to the larger sets of shared beliefs on this in Thai society.

## 9.2 Digital English literacy practices of Thai student-teachers outside the classroom

In order to answer the first research question, this section discusses the digital English literacy practices of the student-teachers outside the classroom and how the affordances of digital technology has allowed them to create a network of linked social spaces in which they engage in these English literacy practices. Student-teachers in this study used digital technology in various ways, and some of these ways created affordances which allowed them to be exposed to English or use English as part of situated literacy practices. All of the student-teachers maintained active profiles on various forms of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and, various local discussion forums. Their roles on social media, however, varied from active contributors and frequent posters to, what are called “lurkers”, or silent participants. Their English literacy practices varied accordingly, with some student-teachers actively using English in posts and discussions, while the more silent participants just listened and read more in English, but posted less frequently or hardly ever. Some student-teachers were also engaged in what Gee (2005) calls affinity spaces; networks of related online social spaces in which people come together to share their interest in or passion for a particular topic. In these affinity spaces, normally comprising a network of connected social spaces, they often used a combination of both Thai and English depending on how access to knowledge on the topic was best navigated. For instance, interesting discussions on Thai food in the case of cooking, would take place in Thai, whereas participation in forums and discussions on drawing techniques for cartoons were usually done in English. In general, for this group of student-teachers' their digital social practices created routes of access to literacy events in English. For some student-teachers these literacy events were a by-product of their Thai digital social practices, whereas for other student-teachers the digital English literacy events were

the main focus. However, in many cases it was impossible to make a clear distinction between digital social, learning and literacy practices since these practices are inextricably related to each other and as argued by people like Barton, Hamilton, Gee and Street , they should not be seen as separated practices. This is illustrated for instance in practices such as watching American sitcoms on YouTube in which student-teachers described that they picked up words, ways of pronouncing words correctly and learned to use these words in context. At the same time, there are numerous examples in which student-teachers use media like web forums and YouTube normally associated with leisure practices, for language learning. Examples of this were found in the use of YouTube channels on English language learning, or asking for help on forums with the correct use of English vocabulary, phrases or figurative speech.

However, two important points need to be made on the basis of these findings. First of all, as Jones (2016) and Gee (2014) point out, the configurations of the affordances and constraints created by digital technology only come into effect at the point at which digital technology is applied within a particular context of use. This was clearly evidenced in the finding that, despite having the tools like smart phones, internet access and so forth, not every student-teacher displayed the skills or the motivation to put those tools to effective use. In other words, their historical trajectories of use of these forms of digital technology did not materialize in digital literacy practices that fully made use of the potential of the affordances these tools offered. As a result, individual student-teachers vary greatly with regard to the daily digital social, learning and literacy practices they engage in. This point is also emphasized by Lemke (2000) who argues that due to the large amount of individual variation in the historical trajectories of engaging in practices, learners experience, perceive and engage in these moments of action and the tools they use to mediate these actions in distinctly different ways.

At the same time, the affordances of digital technology should be carefully interpreted in its ability to help users navigate routes of access to literacy events that allow them to use English (Kalman,

2005). The accounts of the students clearly show that not everyone has developed what Kalman (2005) calls the modalities of appropriation to actively participate in these literacy practices in online spaces. The digital literacy events that student-teachers participate in are typical examples of situated literacy events, and participating in these events means learning the values, the cultural and social practices, and, the discourses that are normative for these situated literacy events (Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Gee, 2004). Some student-teachers made optimal use of the configurations of affordances and constraints that digital technology offered and were well-versed in the discourse practices that were normative for these digital English literacy events. These student-teachers were able to engage in a wide range of digital English literacy practices, such as chatting with foreigners online over Skype and participating in discussion groups, which allowed them to use English meaningfully, be exposed to English, and learn the social and literacy practices associated with these literacy events.. However, there were also student-teachers who were aware of these opportunities, displayed the skills to use digital technology and acknowledged the potential affordances created by digital technology for English language learning, but did not act upon them or felt afraid to participate in these online literacy events. Similar to Kalman's (2005) findings, the presence of the tools and the skills to put these tools to effective use, and, the access to English literacy events did not automatically lead to successful participation in these practices. Student-teachers indicated that the main reason they did not engage in these practices was that they felt they did not know the discourse practices that were normative for participating in these literacy events in these spaces. As a result they were apprehensive about practices such as chatting to foreigners. This illustrates that the presence of digital technology outside the classroom does not automatically create access to English literacy events, and even if access to English literacy events can be navigated, not all student-teachers know the discourse practices and social relationships that are normative to actively participate in these literacy events. This has implications for the way the potential of digital technology as a tool for autonomous learning outside the classroom is seen and how

experiences with technology outside the classroom can be used as a starting point for classroom learning experiences.

### 9.3 Toward a more fluid conceptualization of the classroom

Student-teachers engage in all these practices across various social spaces and an important affordance that mobile digital technology creates is that it allows them to engage in these digital English literacy events relatively free of temporal and spatial constraints. This affordance of digital technology is often used to create a layered simultaneity of interaction. Student-teachers frequently engage in multiple digital practices simultaneously. This lamination of practices creates for some student-teachers an extended network of meaningful connections between the different social spaces. The extended network of meaningful connections between these different social spaces is what Leander et al (2010) refer to as a nexus of relations. This nexus of relations is an important notion since the data from this study suggests that student-teachers' digital practices links various social spaces with each other in ways that do not only affect the practices or tools in those spaces, but also how these spaces are produced or conceptualized. However, as illustrated in the previous section, these nexus of relations are created on the basis of the individual digital learning and literacy practices that these particular student-teachers engage in, and their potential for larger groups of learners is not clear.

Within these laminated layers of interaction, certain practices are foregrounded at particular moments while others are backgrounded. Digital English literacy practices co-exist alongside other practices and this gives way to a more fluid conceptualization of social space in general and of the traditional bounded classroom in particular. Just as Leander and Aplin (2014) describe, practices cycle through social spaces instead of being confined to one particular social space. The data in this study shows how mobile digital technology allows student-teachers to engage in their learning and literacy practices in various social spaces such as the home, a lobby of an academic building, a classroom or a

dormitory room, and, how these practices create trajectories and links between these spaces. In the classroom, these digital social and literacy practices co-exist alongside other, more traditional, learning and teaching practices which are mediated by the dominant discourses on learning and teaching of the teachers on the program. These more traditional discourses that mediate the teaching practices in the classroom represent ideas that view the classroom as a bounded space-time in which the teacher is largely in control of the activities taking place.

The dominant discourse on the role of technology in the classroom largely mitigates against the use of technology as a tool to enhance teaching, creating a situation where student-teachers are only occasionally allowed to use smart phones or laptops as part of controlled learning activities that are initiated by the teacher. These discourses and practices foregrounded by the teacher in the classroom contrast with the fluid conceptualization of the classroom that is produced by the practices the student-teachers bring into the classroom. The student-teachers engage in a number of digital literacy activities in the classroom, foregrounding different discourses and practices. Vignette 1 in chapter 5, for instance, clearly illustrated how student-teachers maintain social interaction at these multiple sites of engagement by selectively foregrounding and backgrounding practices. As a result, multiple discourses and practices on teaching, learning and literacy practices, and, the use of technology co-exist in a layered simultaneity in the classroom.

However, it is important to point out here that this does not always lead to friction or conflict in the classroom. As Lao (2015) found in her research on educational policy and practice in Thai education, various social groups within the Thai education system seem to show a high level of tolerance toward the ambivalence between the discourses and practices in the classroom and beyond. An example of the participants in this study being relatively comfortable with this ambivalence between discourses and practices was found in the use of digital technology in the classroom. Despite the student-teachers' rich historical trajectories of digital English literacy practices outside the classroom, those out-of-class digital

literacy practices that were incommensurate with the discourses restricting the use of digital technology in learning activities by the lecturers were suppressed and backgrounded in classroom learning.

However, despite these restrictions, student-teachers still bring in digital learning practices in various indirect ways such as the learning materials that they have produced using digital technology, memorized phrases and words they have found online, but also in the form of their historical bodies and their past experiences in engaging in digital English literacy practices. As a result, the classroom becomes a more fluid and permeable space. As Massey (2005) argues, the modern classroom is a social space in which practices co-exist alongside each other.

In the context of this study, digital technology has allowed student-teachers to extend their social and literacy practices from outside the classroom into the classroom. As I briefly mentioned above, this happens not only in the form of observable actions such as the use of technology in the classroom, but also in the form of the semiotic artifacts whose production has been mediated by digital technology. The observations from chapters 5, 6 and 7 illustrated how student-teachers used digital technology as the tool to prepare presentations and teaching activities, and practiced the language of presentation outside the classroom. These discourses and practices are rematerialized and resemiotized into semiotic artifacts such as presentations and teaching activities and are brought into the classroom to mediate learning related actions like presentations, group work, and so forth in the classroom. The point I argue here is that the digital tools and practices that were used to produce these semiotic artifacts are co-present in the practices that converge as sites of engagement in the classroom. As a result, it links the classroom to other social spaces through which these practices cycle as well and integrates and makes it a well-connected node in a nexus of relations. However, despite the affordance of digital practices that enables student-teachers to navigate access to literacy events in English in a context in which this is scarce, teachers leave this potential unused in most cases. This finding has

implications for the second research question which will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

#### 9.4 The pedagogical potential of out-of-class digital literacy practices for in-class learning and teaching

I argued in answering the first research question that the pedagogical potential of the out-of-class digital literacy practices of the student-teachers manifests itself in the classroom in direct and indirect ways. In this section I will elaborate on what the exact pedagogical potential of these practices is and how applying the concept of heterochrony can provide insight into this pedagogical potential. A direct application of this potential can be found in activities in which student-teachers are allowed to use digital technology in the classroom in their learning activities and engage in the digital literacy skills that create access to English literacy events outside the classroom. Within the context of Thailand it was expected that the pedagogical potential of these out-of-class digital literacy practices would be high given the high levels of mobile internet subscriptions. However, the data in this study shows that this potential is limited due to the discourses that restrict the use of digital technology in the classroom and the discrepancy between the types of digital practices that are required by the teacher initiated learning activities in the classroom and the digital literacy practices student-teachers engage in outside the classroom. The inclusion of digitally mediated learning activities in the classroom creates the impression that the pedagogical potential of existing digital literacy practices is being realized. However, observations show that the practices associated with technology in the classroom are substantially different from the digital practices that student-teachers engage in outside the classroom as part of their regular digital literacy practices.

Examples of this were found in activities which required student-teachers, for instance, to find a website with English learning materials without a direct purpose. Other activities required student-teachers to draw on digital skills that were not taught as part of the assignment in class, but were

essential for the completion of the assignment. As a result, student-teachers had to use tools like smart phones and computers in a way that is substantially different from the historical trajectories of use that they have formed over time and that have become part of their historical bodies. Although the tools they used were similar, the digital practices that they were required to engage in as part of their classroom learning activities were not practices that create those meaningful links that integrate the classroom as a valuable node in a nexus of relations. Also, the infrequent use of these digital practices in classroom learning activities prevents the formation of new trajectories of use in the shared historical bodies of the student-teachers. As a result, there is not a clear nexus of practice in learning activities in the classroom and the use of technology is limited to incidental moments of use.

Similar observations can be made about the use of English in the classroom. The restrictions on the use of English in the classroom failed to create meaningful links between the practices in which English is used outside the classroom and classroom tasks. The fact that the active use of English was limited to language learning classes taught by foreigners and not extended to the teacher education classes, failed to create the classroom as a node within a nexus of relations. This creates a context of learning in which student-teachers are exposed to conflicting discourses on the use of English in education. The strong discourse of the majority of the Thai teachers on the restriction on the use of English as part of the development of knowledge and skills in teacher education also undermines the role of English as the medium of learning and teaching. These discourses and classroom practices related to the use, or lack of use of English in the classroom create a shared historical body with regard to English in teaching and learning which has implications not only for the current development of student-teachers English proficiency levels, but also for their orientation toward the future use of English in the classroom as part of their professional teaching practices. This will be addressed in more detail in section 9.5.

In addition to the more visible pedagogical potential of digital technology in the classroom, there is another more indirect way in which the pedagogical potential of digital technology is manifested in the classroom. The indirect in-class pedagogical potential of digital learning resides in the out-of-class use of digital technology at the sites of engagement that created the semiotic artifacts used inside the classroom. A good example of this can be found in the preparation of the language of instruction needed for a peer-teaching activity. In preparation for a peer teaching practice activity student-teachers looked up vocabulary and phrases they needed in order to give good instructions in English in the classroom. Another example is found in the digital practices that student-teachers engaged in to create the materials that were used in the peer teaching activity. Although digital technology was not used during the peer teaching practice, the digital practices that student-teachers engaged in created affordances for them that led up to this moment of action in the classroom. In other words, the literacy resources, information on learning activities, and, samples of instructional language in English that the students gained access to by using digital technology, were resemiotized into semiotic artifacts that functioned as the tools to take new actions during teaching practice. The pedagogical potential is not only materialized through the semiotic artifacts that are produced for use in the classroom, but also through the interaction that these semiotic artifacts sustain with practices taking place across time scales. First of all, the digital practices that create these semiotic artifacts create the affordance of access to literacy events that student-teachers would otherwise not have access to in a language learning context like Thailand in which physical access and exposure to English is limited. Secondly, these digital semiotic artifacts allow interaction between processes functioning on different time scales. Short moments of action such as looking up an English phrase online or an idea for teaching are linked to longer processes, such as peer-teaching practice, through the semiotic artifacts that were produced as a result of engaging in these digital practices. This process, what Lemke (2000, 2001) refers to as heterochrony, plays an important role in sustaining processes that function on slower time scales such

as language learning and teacher education programs, but are composed of smaller embedded processes that function on faster time scales such as classroom activities, units of instruction, whole courses and so forth. However, similar to the findings with the direct application of digital technology in the classroom, this potential is limited and highly dependent on the initiatives that student-teachers take outside the classroom to engage in these digital practices that create the affordance of heterochrony.

In addition, the semiotic artifacts that student-teachers interact with as part of the learning activities that in the classroom such as handouts, PowerPoints and course assignments, do not create the affordance of heterochrony in similar ways. In other words, student-teachers are able to bring their digital practices into the classroom, but the learning activities in the classroom fail to take learning outside the classroom. As a result, a large pedagogical potential is left unused and the nexus of practice of learning in the classroom is incommensurate with the individual historical bodies of the student-teachers. However, as S. Scollon (2001) points out, these incommensurate practices in a nexus of practice can co-exist and individual participants who have been socialized into different discourse practices can manage this discrepancy by suppressing or backgrounding certain discourses that might lead to friction. This seems to be the case in the classrooms I have observed, in which the Thai lecturer assumes a clear position of authority. The data shows that student-teachers do not openly engage in discussions with the teachers about the use of technology or English in the classroom, but instead show defiance in other, more subtle ways such as using English in the classroom when this is not required or preferred, using smart phones in the classroom despite the fact that the rules prevent them from doing so or keeping a secret Facebook group through which the latest gossip on teachers and courses is exchanged.

## 9.5 Learning, literacy, English and digital technology in the wider context of Thailand

The last research question of this thesis aimed to understand how the individual (digital) English literacy practices and discourses of the student-teachers and lecturers that were observed at the classroom level relate to the larger, big “D” Discourses in society. A major shortcoming in the current body of research on digital technology in learning and teaching is that the majority of the studies do not take into account how the data from research sites is grounded in the context of the school, the education system or society in general (Macaro et al, 2010). This thesis has addressed this gap by tracing the trajectories of the discourses, practices and tools that converge as sites of engagement beyond the micro-interpersonal level to see how these individual discourses and practices are related to the discourses and practices of other larger social groups in Thai society. The discourses and practices at the different levels of social interaction in this thesis were connected to each other through various themes.

One discourse that is present in practices at all levels is that differences between the groups are conceptualized and thought of in terms of deficiencies. This was noted at all levels from a student-teacher’s decision of whether or not to use English in a presentation for a course assignment since his teacher and classmates would not understand him, to the ministry’s choice to give low or high priority to the role of English and technology in teacher training for secondary school teachers. This deficit discourse (Gorsky, 2011; Valencia and Solorzano, 1997) is manifested in the actions and discourses of individuals at all levels along differences in socio-geographical location and socio-economic status. The deficit discourse on socio-geographical location cycled through all levels and emphasized at the individual student-teacher level the difference between the potential English language and learning abilities of students in the provinces and in the city. Primary and high school students from the rural areas in the provinces were often viewed by student-teachers as being less able to learn English than students in the cities since they did not have a real application of English in their lives and in some cases their cognitive abilities were even questioned. This discourse was observed despite the fact that the

majority of the student-teachers were from these rural areas and had themselves successfully learned English, to an extent, and engaged in a number of digital English literacy practices. A similar Discourse was observed at the Ministry of Education where officials articulated the differences between the teachers working in the vicinity of Bangkok and those working in the provinces. These differences were also seen as deficiencies that according to them manifested in a lack of curriculum development skills at the school level and at the local teacher training college level. At the university level, this Discourse was also observed in the discourses and actions of teachers and administrators. However, here this Discourse on socio-geographical differences such as a lack of access to opportunities to learn English or develop pedagogical skills that allowed them to use English as the medium of instruction was used as an explanation for why the active use of technology and English in the classroom was not possible. Contrary to how the Discourse on the requirement to learn to speak English as part of the ASEAN community has prompted the government, universities and schools to take action on improving English language learning, this social-geographical deficit discourse has been a major factor for the Ministry, the University, teachers and student-teachers to refrain from taking action. This discourse of deficit does not only mediate the present actions observed within the different social groups in Thai society, but it also plays an important role in the way that people anticipate future action.

These anticipatory discourses also evidence this deficit discourse in which student-teachers anticipate for instance the use of English and technology in their future teaching practices in the classroom. This insight into their anticipations on future actions and the knowledge of their digital literacy practices provides a good understanding of how the use of technology is embedded in the wider socio-ecosystem of practices and discourses around the student-teachers. The data from this thesis shows that despite student-teachers' own active engagement in digital English literacy practices outside the classroom, they foreground the dominant discourses on teaching and learning, including the observed deficit discourse, in their anticipations of future teaching practices. The active use of English in

the classroom and the use of digital technology as an effective learning tool are backgrounded in these anticipatory discourses. As a result, it seems that student-teachers socialize into an array of discourse practices that enact the authority position of a language teacher in Thai society that are incommensurate with their current historical bodies as an English language learner. However, as the results show, the student-teachers seem to be relatively comfortable with this ambivalence between discourse and practice and manage this ambivalence by backgrounding those practices incommensurate with the nexus of practice and foregrounding practices that are commensurate. Only a few student-teachers indicated that they feel uncomfortable with this ambivalence between discourse and practice and openly criticized the Thai education system.

These findings are similar to those of Lao (2015) in her research on borrowing western educational policies in Thai education. She indicated that, despite the fact that western education policies are incommensurate with the teaching practices in the Thai classroom, policy makers, administrators and teachers seem to be relatively comfortable with the ambivalence between discourse and practice. The discourses on educational policies and educational reform seem to be backgrounded in the teaching practices in the classroom whereas they are foregrounded in other educational administration practices such as school-based curriculum design, lesson plan writing, and, documentation for the evaluation of quality assurance. This selective foregrounding and backgrounding of discourses creates a very static education system in which a large potential of human and technological resources for development is left unrealized.

#### 9.6 Moments of action as complex intersections

The research questions above discussed how the (digital) English literacy practices, discourses, and other factors converge at moments of action at various levels of social interaction in Thai society. These notions of converging practices as sites of engagement have proven to be insightful; however, they

should not understate or simplify the complexity of these moments of action and its multilayered nature.

First of all, the literacy practices that have formed the core of the analysis involved some form of digital mediation and in many cases the use of digital tools create affordances that allow student-teachers to create multiple layers of simultaneous interaction. These multiple layers of simultaneous interaction did not only add to the complexity of managing attention structures, but also require participants to manage multiple interaction orders. While managing these interaction orders they also need to strategically manage the social practices and literacy practices that are normative for these different interaction orders. This is further complicated as the student-teachers in this study strategically foreground or background social practices that they bring to the classroom or other spaces as part of their individual and shared historical bodies. As demonstrated in answering the last research question, the historical bodies the student-teachers and teachers bring to moments of action include individual discourses and practices as well as larger 'big D' discourses in society such as a strong deficit discourse and anticipations on the future use of English in the classroom and in Thailand in general. These discourses will be co-present as part of the historical bodies that student-teachers and teachers bring to the classroom. These discourses will also play a role in how the student-teachers see their future professional practices as teachers. One way this study illustrates that complexity is in how student-teachers' out-of-class digital English literacy practices are incommensurate with the discourse on the use of English in the classroom at the university while at the same time a more dominant deficit discourse plays a key role in the formation of student-teachers' ideas about the use of English in their future professional practices.

The complexity that the affordances of digital tools bring to the analysis of (digital) literacy practices not only demonstrates the multilayered nature of social interaction, but also initiates a theoretical discussion within the field of mediated discourse analysis. The question arises on how to

approach this multilayered nature of sites of engagement, the production of space(s) by the practices that converge as sites of engagement and how these recognizable, frequently occurring complex sites of engagement should be considered within the notion of the nexus of practice. The second factor that complicates the literacy practices in this study is the fact that our discourses, practices and the way we use tools to take action change over time. As a result, the individual and shared historical bodies we bring to these sites of engagement also change over time. New technological developments rapidly extend the type and the range of actions we can take with new digital tools and individuals develop new trajectories of using these tools to communicate and learn. As a result of these changes, our practices and discourses on the use of these tools and the ways they mediate our literacy practices change as well. The representation of the digital literacy practices observed in this study only capture a moment in time that is subject to changing discourses and practices.

#### 9.7 Contribution of this study to the field of Mediated Discourse Analysis

The field of Mediated Discourse Analysis is progressively expanding and this thesis has aimed to make a positive contribution by adopting both MDA as its theoretical framework and Nexus Analysis as a methodological approach. Other studies in the field of education following a MDA approach (e.g., Jones, 2010; Rish, 2012; Wohlwend, 2009, 2013; Wohlwend and Handsfield 2010) have already shown the value of this approach. This thesis makes of further contribution to the field of MDA by illustrating how MDA can create a better, more comprehensive understanding of the ways in which digital technology influences the teaching and learning taking place not only inside or outside the classroom in particular applications, but also how the discourses and practices in individual spaces are related to each other. This section will discuss two contributions this study has made to the field of MDA. The first contribution is a methodological contribution related to the use of wearable technology which can create a different and more comprehensive perspective on the sites of engagement. The second contribution builds on

the first, and shows how this more comprehensive insight into sites of engagement can function as a lens to better understand the ways that digital literacy practices influence the production of space and the links that are made between the different spaces.

#### 9.7.1 Wearable Technology as a gateway to the site of engagement

Data collection in an ethnographic approach to research like a Nexus Analysis heavily relies on access to situations where discourse can be seen in action. This access is often limited and needs to be negotiated with the participants. In the case of teaching and learning this limits the observations often to the classroom and other pre-selected spaces where participants can be observed. However, since this study has a strong interest in space and the affordance of mobility, a static single research site such as the classroom would have severely limited the scope. (I refer to the methodology section for a more in-depth discussion on the methods and techniques that were used to observe participants.) Therefore a wearable camera was used to track student-teachers actions and practices beyond the classroom. The wearable camera captured still images from a first person perspective every 30 seconds and created the affordance of mobility that allowed observations to take place relatively free of spatial and time constraints. The still images provided insight into those silent discourses and internalized practices that participants are not consciously aware of when asked about their practices in interviews. In addition, the still images created a good insight into the discourses in place that are co-present at these sites of engagement. In this thesis, the still images from the wearable camera played a key factor in identifying, for instance, the digitally mediated actions of the student-teachers such as finding phrases and vocabulary online to be used as part of the instructional language in peer teaching practice. It also provided insight into the discourses and semiotic artifacts that were produced and cycled through these moments of action over the course of an afternoon of preparation. This allowed insight into the ways that digital tools such as smart phones, YouTube and laptops were used when discourses were

resemiotized into new semiotic artifacts across spaces outside the classroom and how these artifacts ended up as the mediational means of a learning inside the classroom. A good example of this was found in the production of the 3d pop-up book which took place through a sequence of activities across a number of spaces including both digital spaces and physical spaces. Some of these actions were digitally mediated actions and some were not. In the end, the final product formed the mediational means for an in-class learning activity and assessment. Without the affordance of mobility that this wearable camera created, it would have been impossible to observe discourse in action at these sites of engagement, the tools that were used at the sites of engagement and the spaces that were produced as a result of these practices and discourses. These observations also provided insight into how engaging in these practices created the affordance of heterochrony in which the semiotic artifacts that were produced as a result of these digital literacy practices allowed student-teachers to link the shorter individual actions to activities and processes running over longer time scales.

#### 9.7.2 Sites of engagement as a lens to look at the production of space

A second contribution that this thesis makes to the field of MDA is its focus on the production of social space. The notion of space has received ample attention within the field of MDA, (e.g., Scollon and Scollon, 2003; Lou, 2014, 2016), however, this has mostly been from a perspective of geosemiotics, the study of how semiotic signs, discourses and actions index meaning in the material world (cf. Scollon and Scollon, 2003). However, the production of social space has received little attention up to date. This thesis has made a contribution to the field by using the site of engagement as a lens to observe the practices, discourses and digital tools that converge at moments of action that produce these social spaces. Although the main aim of Nexus Analysis is to study how discourse cycles in itineraries through the historical body, the interaction order, and the discourses in place (Scollon and Scollon, 2004) the data in this thesis, and a number of other papers (e.g., S. Scollon, 2001; Jones, 2008), have illustrated

how this nexus of these elements is often subject to friction between incommensurate practices and historical bodies within a nexus of practice. The nexus of practice, as Scollon (2002) argues, is something we are socialized into. In other words we learn the discourses and practices of particular social interactions that are normative for these moments of actions and eventually form more routine based encounters. However, the observation of these routine encounters such as the nexus of practice of 'doing class' at a community college in central Thailand might not offer the insight that is needed in order to understand the individualized digital literacy practices that produce the lamination of social spaces that were found in the data.

From a MDA perspective social space is produced as tools, discourses and practices converge and open a real-time window for a moment of action to take place. At this site of engagement, tools such as digital technology that are used as means to take action carry with them the individual historical trajectories of use of the student-teachers. This then creates the affordance that the use of digital technology can be studied in its social context of use in the ways it mediates social, literacy and learning practices and its role in the production of social space. This is contrary to how the current body of research in the wider field of technology and education studies the role of technology often as a decontextualized tool that creates the same configurations of affordances and constraints for each individual learner.

In this thesis, the site of engagement proved to be a very useful tool to study how digital technology mediated individual moments of action that took place as part of a larger chain of actions such as in the process to prepare for a course assignment for the next day. As practices, discourses and digital tools converged as sites of engagement, each of these moments of action provided insight into the individualized trajectories of use of digital technology in participants' practices and how they were able to maintain the construction of multiple social spaces. Often these sites of engagement added a layer of social interaction to an existing site of engagement. As a result of this layered simultaneity of

social interaction, social spaces also became laminated. Student-teachers seemed comfortable in managing these multiple sites of engagement and social spaces through what Jones (2010) has called polyfocal attention structures. This lamination of social spaces and the simultaneous layers of social interaction were the rule rather than the exception in most of the observations. In the few cases observed where there was just a single layer of social interaction, the tools to open up new sites of engagement or participate in existing sites of engagement were always physically present in the form of a smart phone or tablet. These insights that the site of engagement provided did not only provide a better understanding of the digital literacy practices that student-teachers engaged in and the social spaces they produced, but also how these discourses and digital practices producing these spaces made meaningful links between other spaces. This gave insight into how student-teachers were able to bring their digital English literacy practices into the classroom and re-entextualize and resemiotize these discourses as part of learning activities. This was a vital piece of data in answering the research questions. However, this insight into the versatility of the use of the site of engagement as a theoretical tool only developed gradually over time as my understanding of the theoretical tools of MDA was gradually resemiotized into instruments that I was able to use for data collection. In the next section I will reflect on my role as a non-participant researcher and how carrying out this research has affected the lives of the participants in this study.

#### 9.8 Reflection on the research process

An ethnographic approach to doing research always carries a certain risk that the observed results are partly a result of the interaction between the researcher, the participants and the research site. Even if the researcher positions himself as a non-participant observer, the simple presence of an observer in the classroom, for instance, can dramatically influence how a lesson is carried out. In the methodology section I have already reflected on this potential effect and discussed whether 'objective

observation' in data collection is possible in the first place. In this section I take the opportunity to reflect on several examples that have shown that the presence of a researcher can actually have a positive effect and that at times the influence of an observer in the classroom reveals actions and discourses that would otherwise not have been revealed.

I start with an observation I made relatively early in the semester in which I attended a lesson on the course "Instruction of English with Computers". I was seated at the back of the room and the student-teachers were already comfortable with my presence in the classroom. They joked around said "hi" in a casual way and just went about their normal activities. Five minutes into the lesson, the lecturer asked the student-teachers to take out their smart phones and find a website with useful information for English language learning. As part of a course on technology in language learning and teaching this would have been a normal warm-up activity, although the actual focus for the internet search could have been a bit more focused. However, when the lecturer announced this activity, a large number of student-teachers were hiding their smart phones behind their desks, or books, while some were even hiding them in a plastic bag. Most of the student-teachers were surprised that they were asked to use the internet and hesitantly took out their phones. This was a clear signal for me that the use of technology on this particular course was the exception instead of the rule. The lecturer must have decided to alter her plans to showcase the use of technology in the classroom in an attempt to foreground those practices that she believed I was interested in observing. Although the lecturer insisted that these activities were part of the normal teaching and learning practices on the course, the reaction of the student-teachers indicated that the use of technology in the classroom was not part of the shared historical body on this particular course. This placed the rather poor performance of the student-teachers in a different perspective and formed a very useful starting point to trace the trajectories of actions, practices, discourses and semiotic artifacts that led up to this particular moment of action.

In another situation, it was not my presence that prompted people to take action, but rather the fact that the study took place in the first place that had a particular effect on certain participants. As the data collection progressed throughout the semester, my questions about their learning and literacy practices became more complex since I wanted to understand better how they engaged in these practices. During some of the interviews, student-teachers increasingly refrained from contributing to the discussion and tried to avoid answering questions. I first had the impression that this was due perhaps to low English language proficiency levels. Even if I asked the same question in Thai, some of the student-teachers did not answer the question or let their friends answer the questions for them. I decided not to fill these silences with recasts of my questions in Thai and let the student-teachers talk to each other during these silences. The conversations in Thai between the student-teachers revealed that many of them were not used to talking about their own learning and literacy practices and simply experienced difficulties in reflecting on their own learning and literacy experience. This lack of reflection on learning and teaching practices was quite different from my own experience as a teacher trainer in which reflection on practices is an important element. However, this insight provided a better understanding of the teaching and learning practices that the student-teachers engaged in. This observation formed another good starting point to trace back the discourses on the core values of bachelor of education programs and how certain skills and outcomes are foregrounded and others are backgrounded. Identifying these foregrounded discourses also played an important role in understanding student-teachers' anticipatory discourses on their future teaching practices.

These two examples illustrate how these interactions between the researcher, tools of data collection and the participant are actually interesting sites of engagement that do not just produce subjective noise in a data set. On the contrary, in my study these moments of action became valuable research sites that opened up new trajectories of discourses and action to be traced.

## 9.9 Directions for further research

This study finished at the point where the student-teachers had almost graduated from the program. During the six months of data collection, I gradually gained a better understanding of how the discourses, practices and tools that I observed and described shaped how the student-teachers engaged in digital literacy practices outside the classroom and inside the classroom. Although the findings showed how practices, discourses and artifacts cycle through spaces, there is a large potential of research yet to be explored on how these digital literacy practices that developed during their five year degree program will be reproduced in their teaching practices in the future. A large body of research has already provided evidence of the multitude of factors that influence the process of socializing into to the role of a teacher and developing teaching practices in the classroom. However, there is yet a knowledge gap on the ways digital learning and literacy practices, as described in this study, influence the teaching practices of the student-teachers after they have graduated and have become part of the teaching staff at a school.

A recurring theme in the data collection was the highly individualized nature student-teachers' digital literacy practices and how individual student-teachers varied in the ways they capitalized on the configurations of affordances and constraints that digital technology provides in navigating access to and actively participating in digital English literacy events. MDA offers a wide range of theoretical tools to create a better understanding of these tools, but currently lacks the methodological tools to develop a better understanding of the individual developmental trajectories of these digital practices and how they influence the development of English literacy skills. Dynamic Systems Theory (de Bot, Lowie and Verspoor, 2005; Van Geert, 1998, 2008; Thelen and Smith, 1994), is a strand of research which places individual learner variation at the core of its analysis. It offers an array of research tools which can supplement the current MDA approach to research discourse and action, and, allows for an intra-individual and an inter-individual analysis of these patterns of variation in digital practices. This can

create a better understanding of how the individual digital literacy practices develop over time and how teaching and learning activities can make effective use of these practices that exist alongside each other in the classroom.

#### 9.10 Conclusion

This study tried to gain a better understanding of how a small group of student-teachers in central Thailand use digital technology and how these practices affected their English language learning and literacy practices outside the classroom and how engaging in these practices created a pedagogical potential for in-class learning and teaching. This group of student-teachers engaged in a wide range of fascinating digital practices which, in some cases, created affordances for language learning outside the classroom and in some cases it did not create any affordances. Although there is a widespread belief in the existing body of research that digital technology almost inevitably creates opportunities for learning in general and language learning in particular, this study has shown that access to and participation in these digital English literacy events outside the classroom is dependent on how well people are able to actually make use of these affordances and how well they are prepared to engage in the situated literacy practices normative for these out-of-class digital literacy events. This finding does not undermine the potential of digital technology as a tool for language learning and literacy skills development, but it does challenge the commonly accepted linear relationship between digital tools and their effectiveness for learning and teaching. Student-teachers, teacher trainers, teachers, administrators and policy makers should be better aware of these individual learner characteristics and provide extra support in developing the digital literacies and discourse practices that are needed to engage in those digital learning and literacy events that they have planned for learners, both inside the classroom and as homework assignments. In addition, this awareness should extend beyond the

classroom and also be included in the wider process of curriculum planning, and the wider discussion of the role of technology in learning and teaching.

The digital practices that student-teachers engaged in outside the classroom created a pedagogical potential for in-class use, but this potential is hardly recognized by the lecturers on the program and other stakeholders in Thai education. The digital social and literacy practices student-teachers engage in outside the classroom have an impact on the production of the classroom as a social space as well. Student-teachers do not only bring in the digital tools that allow them to create multiple layers of social interaction and social spaces in the classroom, but also bring in their digital practices and discourses that have formed as parts of their historical bodies. This gives way to a more fluid conceptualization of the classroom as a social space in which digital practices co-exist alongside other teaching and learning practices as trajectories running through the classroom. Alongside these trajectories of practices are also the semiotic artifacts such as course assignments, content and scripts for presentations, materials used in peer teaching activities that were produced as the result of out-of-class digital practices and mediate in-class learning activities. This indirect potential of digital technology is rarely recognized by the lecturers. In addition, traditional discourses on teaching and learning restricting the use of digital technology in the classroom creates a nexus of practice in which parts of the historical bodies of the student-teachers become incommensurate with the practices foregrounded in the nexus of practice of classroom learning and teaching. Student-teachers manage this tension by backgrounding those practices and discourses that are incommensurate and foregrounding those practices that are commensurate with the nexus of practice.

However, despite being confronted with the fact that the potential of their out-of-class digital English practices is suppressed in the classroom, student-teachers foregrounded a traditional discourse of deficit articulating differences in socio-geographical contexts and indicated that based on these differences their future students were not ready or able enough to make use of these affordances. This

suggests that, similar to Lao's(2013) findings, the student-teachers in this study seem comfortable with the ambivalence between their own digital literacy practices that have formed their historical bodies and the more traditional Discourses on English language learning, literacy development and digital technology in Thai society. From a societal perspective, this pervasive deficit discourse that was observed at all levels of Thai society also suggests that digital technology, despite its large pedagogical potential for learning and teaching, has little influence on the development of English language learning and English language teacher education in Thailand. Or as one student-teacher casually mentioned during one of the focus group interviews: "we come to class just for (sic) exam".

## Appendix 1: Request for Approval Data Collection NSRU

Freek Olaf de Groot  
City University of Hong Kong  
Department of English  
18 Tat Hong Avenue, Kowloon, Hong Kong SAR

Office of the President, Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University  
ATTN: Asst. Prof. Dr. Benyot Chamnankit, President Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University

RE: Request for data collection

April 25, 2015

Dear Sir,

My name is Freek Olaf de Groot and I am a PhD Candidate in the department of English at City University of Hong Kong. I am writing to ask if it would be possible to carry out part of my data collection for my current research at your university. My research focuses on how students use technology in learning English in both online learning environments and in the actual classroom.

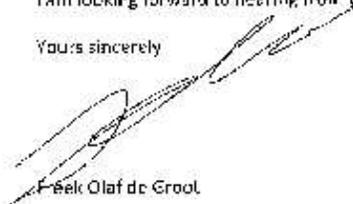
Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University would be a good location for my research as I have previously worked here from November 2007 until April 2009. I am familiar with the learning environment and the students which will greatly help the collection of data for this particular project. In addition, I am acquainted with Dr. Darett Naruemon who has been willing to provide assistance if necessary.

For the current project I am interested in working with students and teachers from the Faculty of Education. I aim at working with a group of 15 second or third year students. The data collection will focus on students' learning routines and it will not include an evaluation of teaching done by faculty. The data collection will consist of interviews with students and teachers, small projects with the students, tracking students' learning routines using digital technology, classroom observations, and a survey of students' learning activities throughout the semester. The data collection will not interfere with the current teaching and learning activities. I intend to spend 6 months in Nakhon Sawan to collect data starting on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 and ending on January 10, 2016.

After I have finished my data collection, I intend to make two workshops available for teachers at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University on language learning in online learning environments, and, I will present the teachers and staff with an overview of my findings.

I am looking forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Yours sincerely



Freek Olaf de Groot

## Appendix 2: Approval Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University for Data Collection



No.0537/863

Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University,  
Nakhon Sawan, Thailand 60000

May 7, 2015

RE: Request for data collection

Dear Freek Olaf de Groot,

In follow up to your request to carry out the data collection for your dissertation research at Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University, I herewith grant you permission for your proposed research plans. You will be granted permission to collect data on campus for the proposed research from July 1st, 2015 to January 15th, 2016. We assume you will take responsibility for the costs to carry out the current project and follow the ethical responsibilities regarding data collection as stipulated by your university.

Sincerely,



(Asst. Prof. Dr. Banyat Chamnankit)

President

Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University

Office of the President

Tel. +66(0)56219100

Fax. +(0)56882523

### Appendix 3: Approval National Research Council Thailand Data Collection and License

สำนักงานคณะกรรมการวิจัยแห่งชาติ  
196 ถนนพหลโยธิน เขตจตุจักร  
กรุงเทพฯ 10900  
โทรศัพท์ 0-2579-2690, 0-2579-2285  
โทรสาร 0-2561-3049



NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL  
196 PHAHOLYOTHIN RD., CHATUCHAK,  
BANGKOK 10900, THAILAND  
Telephone 66-2940-6369, 66-2579-2690  
Fax 66-2551-3049  
[webmaster@nrct-forsigresearcher.org](mailto:webmaster@nrct-forsigresearcher.org)

No. 0002/4491

5 June B.E. 2558 (2015)

Dear Mr. de Groot,

With respect to your application for permission to conduct research in a project entitled "Integrating Out-of-Class Digital Literacy Development and English Language Learning Practices with Classroom Language Learning and Teaching in Thailand" from July 2015 to January 31, 2016 in Nakhon Sawan province, we would be pleased to inform you that your request has been granted.

With regard to immigration regulation, it is recommended that you contact the Royal Thai Embassy to obtain non-immigrant visa (RS) before arriving in Thailand. Please note that you would be requested to contact NRCT's officials at the Foreign Researcher Management Section, the Division of International Affairs, NRCT (1<sup>st</sup> floor, 3-storey building) within seven days after your arrival in Thailand in order to obtain concerned documents and to pay a deposit of THB 10,000 for guaranteeing a submission of your complete report. A map of NRCT with NRCT's office hours is attached herewith for your information.

Should you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact us at [webmaster@nrct-forsigresearcher.org](mailto:webmaster@nrct-forsigresearcher.org) or Tel.+66-2-561-0445 ext.454.

We are looking forward to welcoming you.

Sincerely yours,

(Mr. Krithawat Hopnakeepongse)  
Deputy Secretary - General  
for Secretary - General

Mr. Freek Olaf de Groot  
18 Tat Hong Avenue  
Kowloon Tong  
Kowloon  
Hong Kong SAR

Encl.

## Appendix 4: Consent form Participants – Student-teachers

### INFORMATION SHEET PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant,

*You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.*

This research project is carried out by a PhD candidate from City University of Hong Kong and he is not affiliated with Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University. The results coming from this project will be kept anonymous. Your teachers, mentors and fellow students will not be informed on the results of your participation in this research.

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this project is to get a better understanding about how students learn and what the role of technology is in learning.

#### **What will happen**

In this project you will be asked to wear a portable camera for a day. The camera will take a picture of the view in front of you every 30 seconds and it remembers where the picture is taken. The idea is that we can follow your activities during the day without having to walk behind you all day.

#### **Your rights**

- You are free to switch off the camera at any time
- You have to switch off the camera if you are going into a private space (someone's office, restroom etc)
- You have to switch off the camera when leaving the campus
- At the end of the day, you have first access to the pictures and you are free to erase any picture without reason given

#### **Risks and Benefits**

There are no known benefits or risks for in participating in this research.

**What happens to the data**

The pictures collected will be used as part of a PhD dissertation research and other future publications coming from this dissertation. Your name and other personal information will never be disclosed. The data will be erased 6 months after completion of the PhD.

**Contact details**

You can reach the researcher, Freek Olaf de Groot at all times at +66 99 125 0486.

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Learning and technology across social spaces

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the current research and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I certify that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason.	
I confirm that I have the researchers' telephone number and that I can contact him at any time while wearing the camera.	
I understand that I can turn off the device at any time without reason given.	
I agree to participate in the visual data experiment and wear the camera for the designated time for this project.	
I understand that the materials collected will be kept completely anonymous, that any faces of the people in the pictures are pixilated and thus made unidentifiable.	
I agree that the materials collected can be used in the dissertation resulting from this project and any other future academic publications coming forth from this project.	

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

## Appendix 5: Consent Form Wearable Camera

### INFORMATION SHEET PARTICIPANTS

Dear participant,

*You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.*

This research project is carried out by a PhD candidate from City University of Hong Kong and he is not affiliated with Nakhon Sawan Rajabhat University. The results coming from this project will be kept anonymous. Your teachers, mentors and fellow students will not be informed on the results of your participation in this research.

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this project is to get a better understanding about how students learn and what the role of technology is in learning.

#### **What will happen**

In this project you will be asked to wear a portable camera for a day. The camera will take a picture of the view in front of you every 30 seconds and it remembers where the picture is taken. The idea is that we can follow your activities during the day without having to walk behind you all day.

#### **Your rights**

- You are free to switch off the camera at any time
- You have to switch off the camera if you are going into a private space (someone's office, restroom etc)
- You have to switch off the camera when leaving the campus
- At the end of the day, you have first access to the pictures and you are free to erase any picture without reason given

#### **Risks and Benefits**

There are no known benefits or risks for in participating in this research.

**What happens to the data**

The pictures collected will be used as part of a PhD dissertation research and other future publications coming from this dissertation. Your name and other personal information will never be disclosed. The data will be erased 6 months after completion of the PhD.

**Contact details**

You can reach the researcher, Freek Olaf de Groot at all times at +66 99 125 0486.

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS**

Learning and technology across social spaces

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the current research and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.	
I certify that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason.	
I confirm that I have the researchers' telephone number and that I can contact him at any time while wearing the camera.	
I understand that I can turn off the device at any time without reason given.	
I agree to participate in the visual data experiment and wear the camera for the designated time for this project.	
I understand that the materials collected will be kept completely anonymous, that any faces of the people in the pictures are pixilated and thus made unidentifiable.	
I agree that the materials collected can be used in the dissertation resulting from this project and any other future academic publications coming forth from this project.	

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

## **Appendix 6: Consent Form Research Interview**

### **INFORMATION SHEET PARTICIPANTS**

Dear participant,

*You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.*

This research project is carried out by a PhD candidate from City University of Hong Kong. He is not affiliated with any institute of higher education in Thailand. The results coming from this project will be kept anonymous.

#### **Purpose of the research**

The purpose of this project is to get a better understanding of the role of technology in Thai education.

#### **What will happen**

In this interview you will be asked a number of questions related to the role of technology in Thai education by the researcher. The discussion will be video recorded for analysis.

#### **Your rights**

- You are free to answer or refuse to answer any question at any time without giving reason
- You are free to stop participating in this research at any time without giving reason
- You are free to use Thai whenever you feel that you have difficulties answering the questions in English

#### **Risks and Benefits**

There are no known benefits or risks for in participating in this research.

#### **What happens to the data**

The data collected will be used as part of a PhD dissertation research and other future publications coming from this dissertation. Your name and other personal information will be kept anonymous. The video data will be erased 6 months after completion of the PhD.

**Contact details**

You can reach the researcher, Freek Olaf de Groot at all times at +66 99 125 0486.

**INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWEE**

Learning and Technology in Thai Education

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the current research and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions.

I certify that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving reason.

I understand that I can refuse to answer any question without giving reason.

I agree to participate in one or more video or audio recorded interviews for this project and that the interview and related materials will be kept completely anonymous.

I agree to be quoted or paraphrased using a pseudonym in the dissertation resulting from this project and any other future academic publications coming forth from this project.


\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Interviewee

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

## Appendix 7: Example of a Data Collection Journal Entry (Anonymized)

Thursday 20/08	I met with the last group today for the first time. It's a relatively shy group with few of them actually being able to utter more than a full sentence. By using a lot of Thai and making sure that I double checked their answers I was able to get some information. However, this group is going to be a bit shaky in terms of confirming emerging discourses. So for now I just have to focus on the combination of both the observations that I do with them and the focus group interviews. Maybe the video assignments will reveal a bit more about the emerging themes.
Thursday – Sunday 20- 23/08	I have been working on the transcriptions of the interviews and the translations of the parts that were in Thai. [redacted] has been able to help out on quite a few occasions which has been very useful in finding out more. The only problem I have now is that the participants are relying too much on the use of Thai and too little on the use of English. This can be an advantage or a disadvantage. I might have to just bend it to my advantage.
Monday 24/08	I did the first classroom observation with a foreign teacher. The class was a patchwork of activities but I was able to make some observations of which I think might be helpful. But the fact that they don't benefit from the presence of the foreigners is already quite clear if they're being taught in this way. I have worked out the results of the observation.
25-01/09	I spent most of the time during this week going from hospital to hospital doing scans and finding a doctor to help me with my knee problems. I have been working on the transcripts and the class observations.
01/09	Today I did an observation of Aj. [redacted] class. It was room 1 and she had the students do presentations of teaching techniques and a demonstration of teaching activities. I was in the class for the full three hours. My initial observations are worked out in the to-do-list and the summary of class observation.
07-11/09.	This week I was informed that my operation is scheduled for next week. What I tried to do was to do as many observations as possible and to schedule the four

## Appendix 8: Transcription conventions

WORD	Capitals indicate sounds louder than the surrounding sounds
{TH:...}	Translated from Thai
(.)	Short gap, less than a second
(2.0)	Longer, timed pause
[...]	Brackets indicate overlap with another speaker
:::	Colons indicate a lengthening of the prior sound
Cherry	Pseudonym participant
125	line number
↑	Rising tone
↓	Falling tone
(laughs)	comment added by the researcher to provide information on additional visual cues not captured in the transcription

## Appendix 9: Example of Coded Classroom observation Summary (anonymized)

Document Browser: Summary of Class observation 15102015A

groups.

13 [redacted] gives instructions for the activity. She appears to be much more fluent in the classroom situation than in the focus groups. The sentences she has prepared are memorized as she loses her script once. This group does one round of modeling the instructions. However, the students seem to understand and in their groups work out in Thai the instructions. The activity involves reading a short description and then guessing the animal. On the board are the five groups and one writer for each group has to run up to the board to write down the answer. For the first description all the groups write down Rabbit, except for [redacted] she writes down carrot. The mistake is soon noticed and all burst out in laughter. The next round the same group makes a mistake and writes down "yellow" instead of "lion". They check all the answers and cross out the wrongly spelled ones such as Hos for horse elepant for elephant and giraf. There are a surprising number of mistakes made in spelling. The winners have to do a little dance

14 [redacted] and [redacted] are up next. Their group does a similar introduction and division of groups. There is minimal modeling for the students to observe and the instructions are quite formal with all adverbs and nouns etc being inflected. It sounds a bit unnatural.

15 The activity involves jumbled up words that the groups have to guess. The first group to guess has to write a sentence on the blackboard and then the rest has to judge if the sentence is correct. During the modeling [redacted] notices that a sentence that has been judged ok is incorrect. He says something about it and is mocked by the rest of the class although he is right. The rest of the sentences produced by the groups are fairly straightforward and basic: I eat chocolate every day. I like dogs. Etc etc. [redacted] however, takes the opportunity to push the envelope a bit. He writes on the board: I always play basketball with my boyfriend. As the sentence is unfolding on the whiteboard you can hear students starting to riot and giggle. The facilitators almost try to stop him but he completes the sentence, gives a sneer to the group and literally sashays away.

16 The next group is that of [redacted] and four of her friends. They have a fairly basic activity focusing on the use of prepositions. The introduction and group formation is similar to that of the other groups. They use English as well with standard formulaic use of English. The activity they run with the group is a reading activity after which they have to make a drawing of what they have read. All the groups present their drawing. [redacted] and two others volunteer to present their drawing. [redacted] presents it in a very straightforward style and tries to be as accurate as possible while Ing turns it into a performance with high voice pitches and a very animated voice. [redacted] on the other hand takes the stage and with a heavy American accent presents her poster. The other students present it by just pointing out the parts of the poster.

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## **Appendix 10: Extract of Campus field notes taken (Week 2)**

Other B.Ed students hang around their faculty on the concrete benches in front of the offices on the first floor. It is not too hot there and the wifi signal is doable at around -80 – -50 DbM. Although students have told me the signal is weak and every device needs to be registered individually with the ICT services. Most of them use their own data package. There is an LCD screen providing general information in a slideshow about the university and the faculties. It includes announcements about activities, achievements, awards, a pictorial guide to the university dress code illustrating hairdo for the girls, three types of shoes both for girls and boys are suggested and some pictures of students in full attire set an example. For the rest there is information about where to find academic resources, the philosophy of the university, the mission, promoting friendship is greater than victory, and, the vision. The coffeeshop, Sit Nee, has a couple of students inside enjoying the coolness of the air conditioning although I suspect most students prefer the cheaper coffees from the stalls around that go for about half of the price.

Behind the faculty of education is a small sports field where some of the students play basketball in the afternoon heat. On the side of the road are a number of spaces in the shade where students sit in smaller or larger groups. Usually close to each other, chatting away, smartphones in hand, a bottle of water within reach and some food in a plastic bag or Styrofoam box or a cardboard cup of MaMa noodles bought at one of the mobile shops nearby these sitting areas. WiFi in these places are around -90 DbM and very weak if there is coverage at all.

I have sat in a couple of offices over the last week waiting for people or paperwork. Offices are small and crowded with 6-8 teachers sharing an office of around 15 m<sup>2</sup>. Most teachers are using their own laptops and internet is slow as they say. Most teachers have a number of portable devices on their, usually very old wooden desks. Tablets smartphones, and everything in between. It's a coming and going of people at these offices. This is most likely because of the quality assurance presentation this week in which teachers need to be on standby to provide extra data if the auditors require it. However, it seems that students are trying to get signatures from teachers as well.

Students follow a particular code of entrance when they enter the office. They gather in front of the window, peer in to see if their teacher is in, discuss with each other what to do, and peer through the blinds in front of the door again to locate their teacher. They knock on the door, open the door, wai the

teacher(s) present, take off their shoes and walk to their teachers desk. They then sit down on their knees next to the teacher's desk before asking a question. In some cases the age difference between students and teachers cannot be more than 5-7 years. After they have finished what they came for the wai the teacher again before standing up and putting their shoes back on they left outside the office. The campus is an intersection of activities all taking place simultaneously. A soccer game with a commentator on the PA system will blast at 90 DB at the same time that classes are being taught 20 meters across the road in the building of one of the faculties. Food stalls and shops can be found scattered over the place although the motorbike sidecars with their mobile barbecues seem to be absent at the moment on campus.

## Appendix 11 Extract of teaching practice journal kept by student-teacher

9/11/2015

It was a busy and excited day. Today was the first day that I came back to this school again after I had graduated since 7 years ago. Many teachers there told me the time had passed so fast. It seemed I just graduated for 2 or 3 years.

After praying the national flag, I introduced myself to every students and teachers formally there in English, but certainly they didn't understand so I had to translate my word into Thai. Hahaha Then my first teaching class started at 8.30. I was so excited when I met my lovely students at the first time. They were also excited and active.

Today I had classes whole day, 5 periods. I taught P4-P6. I was so tired, because I spoke and explained my activities to them all the time. I tried to use easy English as much as possible. But sometime I looked at their eyes which showed me not understand, I had to speak in Thai.

10/11/2015

Today, I had only 1 class in the morning. The students felt more relaxing than yesterday. They paid attention to my teaching and went along with me. They said they were happier to study with me than the teacher, because I was so cheerful and understand what the problems are when they didn't understand about lesson.

Appendix 12: Overview of Credits breakdown of the 5 year B.Ed. English Curriculum NSRU

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หลักสูตรปรับปรุง พ.ศ. 2554																																																																		
<p>ชื่อสถาบันอุดมศึกษา : มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏนครสวรรค์ คณะ/ภาควิชา : คณะครุศาสตร์</p> <p><b>ข้อมูลทั่วไป</b></p> <p>1. รหัสและชื่อหลักสูตร ภาษาไทย : หลักสูตรครุศาสตรบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ ภาษาอังกฤษ : Bachelor of Education Program In English</p> <p>2. ชื่อปริญญาและสาขาวิชา ภาษาไทย ชื่อเต็ม : ครุศาสตรบัณฑิต (ภาษาอังกฤษ) ชื่อย่อ : ค.บ. (ภาษาอังกฤษ) ภาษาอังกฤษ ชื่อเต็ม : Bachelor of Education (English) ชื่อย่อ : B.Ed. (English)</p> <p>3. หลักสูตร 3.1 หลักสูตร หลักสูตรครุศาสตรบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษ 3.1.1 จำนวนหน่วยกิตรวมตลอดหลักสูตร ไม่น้อยกว่า 167 หน่วยกิต 3.1.2 โครงสร้างหลักสูตร มีดังนี้</p>		<p>ก. หมวดวิชาศึกษาทั่วไป จำนวน 32 หน่วยกิต</p> <p>ข. หมวดวิชาเฉพาะด้าน จำนวนไม่น้อยกว่า 129 หน่วยกิต ประกอบด้วยวิชาชีพครูไม่น้อยกว่า 51 หน่วยกิต วิชาเอกไม่น้อยกว่า 78 หน่วยกิต ดังนี้</p> <p>1. วิชาชีพครู จำนวนไม่น้อยกว่า 51 หน่วยกิต แบ่งออกเป็น วิชาชีพครูบังคับ จำนวน 31 หน่วยกิต วิชาชีพครูเลือก ไม่น้อยกว่า 6 หน่วยกิต วิชาประสบการณ์ภาคสนาม จำนวน 14 หน่วยกิต</p> <p>1.1 วิชาชีพครูบังคับ จำนวน 31 หน่วยกิต มี 11 รายวิชา ดังต่อไปนี้</p>																																																																
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