



FILIPINOS AS NNES-EFL TEACHERS IN THAILAND: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



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The English Language Teaching in Thailand

- English as a Foreign language
- Ineffective in producing perfect Thai English users (Kongkerd, 2013).
- Most students find learning the English language as a daunting task (Kaewmala, 2012).
- Teacher-centered where students are passive learners (Simpson, 2011).
- Low English competency level compared with other countries in the ASEAN region (Hickey, 2014).

The demand for English teachers

- Low English competency level
- ASEAN economic integration
- Expand its language instruction and bilingual programs
- Improve the English Programs (Hickey, 2014).
 - Native English speakers and non-native English speaker-teachers

Female Native English Teachers

Intertots Trilingual School - 5th Jun 2017

private Chachoengsao
At least 90,000 Baht/month

Native English Speaking Teachers

inlingua International School of Languages - 5th Jun 2017

language Bangkok
At least 400 Baht/hour

Experienced NES Teachers

inlingua International School of Languages - 5th Jun 2017

language Bangkok
At least 400 Baht/hour



Experienced NES English Teacher

REPS (Rayong English Programme School) - 5th Jun 2017

45K, All visa and work permit

government
At least 40,000 Baht/month

NES Teaching Position

Kasintorn St. Peter School

private
At least 40,000 Baht/month

NES Teacher for English Program (45K)

Vittayalai School

Vittayalai English School
ends one full-time position
July start. Compensation

NES Teachers for Primary School

Text-And-Talk - 4th Jun 2017

language Bangkok
At least 35,000 Baht/month



NES Teacher for Language School

English Corner, Jas Ramintra branch - 4th Jun 2017

language Bangkok
At least 500 Baht/hour



NES Teacher for Language School

Oxford English Academy - 4th Jun 2017

Jun 2017

We urgently require part-time native English speakers for our language school on the 2nd Floor of The Paseo Town, Ramkhamhaeng Road (Soi 127/4), to the east of Bangkok.

language Bangkok



Due to our latest successful applicant's visa issue, we are now looking for a NES teacher to fill the following position. This is an IMMEDIATE start as teaching will commence on 15th June. The position is within our 'Gifted' section and the students' English level is high so it is a fun position designed to encourage them to communicate via role-play etc..

1 IP Drama/English Teacher G3-6

We offer 45,000b per month (12 month contract), 10,000b completion bonus for non-returning teachers and a 25,000b completion bonus for returning teachers.

Our school is currently looking for an 'English teacher' to teach at an all girls high school near Khao San Road.

Job details:

- English Program (teaching from a textbook)
- Focusing on grammar, vocabulary and conversation
- Teaching M4, M5, & M6
- Starting ASAP.
- Finishing on 30th March, 2018
- 40,000 baht a month
- Non B and Work permit provided (teachers' expense)

Requirements:

- MUST be a 'NATIVE ENGLISH' teacher
- MUST be already residing in Thailand
- MUST have a BA degree

from Native English speaking position will

in receiving application from thumthani province. (near Nakorn Nayok Rd.)

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1 IP Drama/English Teacher G3-6

We offer 45,000b per month (12 month contract), 10,000b completion bonus for non-returning teachers and a 25,000b completion bonus + 20,000b for returning teachers.

Filipino teachers in Thailand

- One of the largest English speaking population countries in the world (Hernandez, 2015).
- There are more than 20,000 Filipinos in Thailand (Novio, 2014).
 - ✓ More than 16,000 are teachers.
 - ✓ These numbers do not yet include those Filipinos who are undocumented.
- Filipino teachers found a great opportunity to work in Thailand especially in the English teaching field.
- They speak the English language clearly and teach the Thai students patiently.
- They are one of the most preferred nonnative English teachers in the country.

Related studies

- Frederiksen (2014) focused on Filipino teachers abroad,
 - only one Filipino teacher teaching in Thailand.
 - with interview as her primary research method, she found that the primary role of Filipino teachers was to teach communication and literacy skills.
 - Filipino teachers chose to work abroad because of better salary rates, and a good working environment.
 - Challenges include; language barrier, homesickness, and lower salary rates compared to native speaking teachers.
- Hickey (2014) made a fieldwork study where she interviewed African and Filipino foreign teachers teaching English in rural schools in the Eastern and Northeastern Thailand.
 - she revealed that the decision of these teachers to teach in schools outside of Bangkok was because they found it difficult to get a teaching job in the country's capital due to their non-nativeness in the English language. She further noted that racism, discrimination in the workplace, and receiving less salary rate were the common issues and problems faced by these NNESTs in Thailand.

Walkinshaw and Duong (2012) studied students' preference to be taught by a NES and a NNES teacher in Vietnam. With 50 Vietnamese English language learners, the result of the study revealed that students preferred the native speaker-teachers of English since they believed that native-speakers possessed an ideal English pronunciation model; and that native speaker-teachers are better English language teachers.

Walkinshaw and Duong (2014) examined the student perceptions on native and non-native English teachers in Japan and Vietnam. With university students as participants of their study, it was found that NESTs were perceived to be good models of the English language, but poor at grammar lesson discussion. The non-NESTs, on the other hand were perceived to be good at teaching grammar lessons. However, the study did not mention whether Filipinos were part of these non-NESTs.

The purpose of this paper

Although the studies mentioned above, concentrated on nonnative English teachers, none of them focused on the perceptions of Filipinos while teaching English as well as their conditions (problems and challenges) as nonnative English speaker-teachers in Thailand.

Considering the findings of this study; and understanding the living conditions of foreign teachers would greatly impact on the language education in the ASEAN region.

Research Problems

This present study addresses the following questions:

- 1. What are the perceptions of Filipino teachers as nonnative English speaking-teachers with regards to teaching English language in Thailand?
- 2. What are the challenges, issues and problems that the Filipino English teachers in Thailand encountered?

Methodology

Research Setting and Respondents

*This study was conducted in Bangkok.

*78 Filipino teachers (from 11 schools visited) but only 56 teachers (34 males and 22 females) returned the answered questionnaire.

*These teachers aged 22-46; and with 10 months to 18 years of teaching experience both in the Philippines and in Thailand.

*Most teachers held bachelor's degrees, while only 8 were MA/MS degree holders.

*27 teachers were teaching in secondary schools (Mathayom), 14 in elementary (Prathom), 10 in kindergarten (Anuban), and only 5 in colleges and universities.

Data gathering procedure

- 11 schools were visited and a number of Filipino teachers were identified.
- A baseline survey and an initial interview were conducted.
- The survey questionnaire was uploaded through the survey monkey website.
- The link of the questionnaire online was individually forwarded to the respondents.
- Follow up individual interviews were done in person and through Facebook chats.

Research tools

- The questionnaire was modified and adapted from Abe, (2014); Frederiksen (2014); and EI Portal Survey-International Teacher Migration.
- The interview was centered on the respondents' English teaching conditions including some problems.
- The data were collected between the months of May and July 2016.

Survey questionnaire findings

➤ Reasons

- Support their families back in the Philippines (100%).
- Salary in Thailand is much better than in the Philippines (96%).
- Gain teaching experience abroad (83.55%).
 - Job Contract/work environment
- Directly hired by the school (71.06%).
- No housing allowance, medical insurance (83.55%)
- Salary is lower than the native English speaking-teachers (78.90%).
- Continue teaching here for more years (91.66%).

➤ The School environment and the support staff

- The school does not provide training and other professional development for all teachers (67.66%).
- The school does not provide them with other benefits (80.23%).
 - Thai students and the English classroom
- The students respect them as Filipino English teachers (79.17%).
- Most of their students think they should have a native-like accent (50%).
- They employ interactive activities, games and other child-centered strategies (91.66%).
- They always make their English classroom a fun place to learn English (95.83%).
- Their experience as EFL teachers has been positive so far (100%).

Table 5. Percentage distribution on respondents' response to statements about the challenges they face while teaching English in Thailand.

Statements	
1. Adjusting to new curriculum	69.57
2. Classroom management	73.91
3. Mix of students of different abilities in classroom	79.17
4. Separation from family	70.83
5. Cultural differences	70.83
6. Interaction with the locals	60.87
7. Working with local teachers	54.17
8. Discrimination	39.13
9. Visa	43.48

Interview Findings

- 1. Teaching English to Thai students was challenging as students were not very interested in learning English.
- 2. They had to prepare games and other interactive activities that were easy for the students to do.
- 3. Language also was a problem.
- 4. They sometimes felt that teaching English was pure business, superficial and too limited in the classroom.
- 5. Learning is never practiced or reinforced outside the classroom.

Summary of important findings

✓ Native vs. non-native issue

- Teachers perceived that their students think that they should have a native like accent to teach English. There was a split in opinions (50% of the respondents agreed, 50% disagreed). Although the respondents perceived it this way, their students still respected them as English teachers.

✓ Lack of professional development among teachers.

- Although, these Filipino teachers came to teach in Thailand for financial reason, professional development which includes teacher trainings, and other teaching methodologies/strategies seminars and workshops should not be ignored.

✓ Inequality between the salaries of native and nonnative English speaking teachers in schools.

- The results of this study indicate that native English speaking teachers received much higher salaries compared with the salary received by the nonnative English speaking teachers.

✓ Generally, although teacher respondents revealed some of the challenges and issues they faced while teaching English in Thailand, they also held a positive view of it as many of them had found that teaching there gave them an opportunity to grow professionally in language teaching.

The findings are only limited with regards to the whole context and the selected participants. Hence, it is not representative of the entire population.

Recommendations

1. Future studies may concentrate on other non-native English speaker teachers teaching in Thailand in order to provide different views towards language teaching in the country.
2. The same study should not only be conducted in Bangkok but in other member-countries of the ASEAN region to compare some issues and challenges which are revealed in this study.
3. It is also recommended that further research could include case studies of 2 or 3 individuals to give ethnographic information about Filipino NNESTs in Thailand.
4. Non-native English speaking teachers also should set up a support group or network in order to exchange teaching strategies and experiences, share living conditions, and simply support each other in whatever way.

Conclusion

- This study presented the conditions of, problems and challenges faced by, and the perceptions of Filipino teachers as non-native English speaking teachers in Thailand.
- Findings revealed that participants held positive views (personally and professionally) with regards to teaching English in Thailand.
- However, some issues on being a native English speaker and a nonnative English speaker, teacher professional development, and monthly compensation surfaced in the study.
- The identified issues and challenges should be given consideration by the heads of schools in order to have better teaching conditions both for native and nonnative English speaker teachers.

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- Since Asia has become the hub for English teaching jobs both for native and nonnative English speaking teachers, recognizing the challenges and issues as well as the perceptions of these migrant teachers is deemed important towards a better teaching environment.
 - Given the right qualifications, teaching experience, and appropriate degree, native and nonnative English speaking teachers are equally significant in language teaching.

Thank you