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**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## Shadow Education: A Case Study of Grade 10-12 Students' Perspectives towards the Influencing Factors Affecting English Language Learning Competency

Suthee Khamkaew, Ph.D.<sup>1</sup> ✉ and Aifa Trussat, Ms.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Vice Dean, College of Teacher Education, Phranakhon Rajabhat University; School Director and English Language Lecturer, Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand

<sup>2</sup>Head of Foreign Languages Department and English Language Lecturer, Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, Thailand

**Corresponding Author:** Suthee Khamkaew, **E-mail:** [suthee.kh@pnru.ac.th](mailto:suthee.kh@pnru.ac.th)

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to investigate the influencing factors affecting students' English learning experiences of grade 10-12 students in the consecutive academic years of 1/2022 at Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University. The participants were 140 students who are studying Science-mathematics majors, Mathematics-English major, English-Chinese major, and English-Japanese major. The instrument used for data collection was the Google form questionnaire. The results of the Google form questionnaire were interpreted, categorized and tabulated on computer sheets. The findings revealed that the majority of the students studied in grade 11 and attended the English Tutorial class outside school. The reasons for attending the tutorial class were 1) to prepare for the Thai University Center Admission System (TCAS), 2) to prepare for the specific test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, GED, TOEIC, OPI and OPIC, Cambridge Exams, TU-GET and CU-TEP, 3) to improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills and 4) to improve ability in vocabulary and grammar use. New vocabulary, English practice and feedback, advanced grammar structure, and speed reading should be strongly emphasized in further English courses.

### KEYWORDS

Shadow Education, Tutorial Schools, and English Language Learning Competency

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

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### 1. Introduction

Thailand has started to reform its school system by infusing elements of Western education models since the early 19th century, especially higher education. Currently, Thailand's school system is a result of the reforms introduced by the 1999 National Education Act. Thailand's national curriculum consists of eight core subjects — Thai language, mathematics, science, social studies, religion and culture, health and physical education, arts, careers and technology, and foreign languages. The system is split into four distinct stages, covering pre-school, primary education, secondary education and tertiary education.

The leading Thailand education problem in urban and rural Thailand is the inequality of educational opportunities. Many types of research show that this problem has caused difficulties in improving the Thailand education system as a whole. Students' proficiency in English, science, mathematics, Thai language skills and critical thinking have been dropping compared with the international standards. Another Thailand education problem lies in the teaching system in schools, where there is a lack of impact on transferring knowledge, overcrowded classrooms and poor monitoring of students' progress. For example, Thai secondary schools are hindered by inadequate learning materials and physical infrastructure. The Thai secondary school system is intensely lacking in qualified teachers: secondary schools in rural areas are much more understaffed and under-resourced than their urban

counterparts. Moreover, Thai primary schools are critically short of teachers. As a result, teachers have to cover many more subjects and/or grade levels than their counterparts in larger schools.

University entrance exams began back in 1973, which enabled students to select the top universities and courses they wanted to study. This system did away with GPA scores, meaning no matter what grades you acquired in high-school, only the entrance exam actually counted. This was the same year supplementary tutoring schools really took off in Thailand. The school system broke down as students began to pay less attention in school, as their grades were essentially useless. It took until 1999 for this system to be replaced, re-incorporating GPA scores. However, by that time, the foundations for supplementary tutoring classes had already been laid. Some scholars view private supplementary tutoring as a form of shadow education because it fulfills the gap between students' expectations and actual learning in the mainstream (Bray, 2007).

The term 'shadow education' refers to private education by informal education institutions or tutoring informally by individual teachers or outsiders from schools. It is a common phenomenon that private supplementary tutoring is considered shadow education (Bray and Silova, 2006), as Bray (2013) claims that private tutoring is understood as a natural element of mainstream schooling. For example, 80% of students in grade 10 received tutoring. In China, 73.8% of primary students were receiving supplementary lessons, and 85.5% of senior secondary students had received tutoring in Hong Kong. Similarly, in India, up to 77.2% of students in grades 4-8 had received tuition, and in the Republic of Korea, 60.5% of students in general high school received tuition. Likewise, in the Philippines, 46.5% of grade 10 students received tutoring (Bray and Lykins, 2012, p. 6). In England, 68 % of tutorials usually took place at the home of the student, and tutorials typically remained for one hour (Tanner et al., 2009); as is mentioned, "It has grown significantly in both industrialized and less developed societies" (Bray, 2003).

A similar situation can be seen everywhere now in many East Asian societies, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. Research also indicates that private tutoring is a growing phenomenon in the world (Bray and Silova, 2006). Today students are required to take a range of tests, including GAT- PAT, 9 common subjects, as well as Educational Testing Service in the five major subjects. However, the school curriculum doesn't properly prepare students for these exams, either by not focusing on the right subjects or not giving students the tools to be able to solve problems. The very purpose of private tutoring is to complement mainstream education. Teachers at tutorials focus all their attention on past exams, extrapolating the data to anticipate future exams, which bear far greater results. Therefore, as there is a change in mainstream education, the content and method of private tutoring also change (Bray and Lykins, 2012).

The pressure for today's students to study further in the university has led to the growth of shadow education – tutoring schools. For example, Prakhov and Yudkevich (2019) demonstrated how access to higher education in Russia could be limited for lower-income students, as their better-off counterparts may afford pre-entry courses at university, which were found to improve their test results. In England, Ireson and Rushforth (2011) mapped the nature and prevalence of the phenomenon in three transition points (years 6, 11 and 13) and found that 71% of students who ever had a private tutor claimed it was to do well in an entrance exam into secondary school. Hajar (2020) documented how the existence of grammar schools in the UK contributed to the prevalence of private tutoring among year 6 students. Guill and Lintorf (2019) examined the role of high-stake testing in the transition to various lower-secondary tracks by comparing German federal states (Bundesländer), which differ in the level of selectiveness for the lower-secondary admissions. Guill and Lintorf found that in regions where the transition from primary to secondary school is high in stakes, the probability of being privately tutored was higher than in other regions.

According to ThaiRath, in 2014, 60.2% of Thai high school students said that they took these courses because they struggled to understand what was being taught in schools and that what was being taught in school didn't correspond with what was on entrance exams, unlike what was taught in these tutorials. According to Longtunman.com, private tutoring is valued at around 8 billion baht in Thailand each year, a number which has been consistently increasing since 2012.

The English subject has been taught in Thailand since 1921 (Baker, 2008). According to Kaur et al. (2016), "... Thailand's English-language teaching and learning were falling behind other ASEAN countries". Although Thais studied English for at least two hundred years (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018), it has regularly been reported in various mass media that the English language proficiency of Thais, in general, is below standard. This shadow education (Bray et al., 2013; Dawson, 2010; Hamid et al., 2009; Ireson and Rushforth, 2011) has become an essential component of the education system, and Thailand is no exception.

Many factors have been identified to account for this chronic problem, such as a lack of quality language input, a limited opportunity to use English in daily life, poor instruction delivered by unqualified local teachers and so on (Nunan, 2003). One of the reasons for the popularity of shadow education, English language tutorial being a quintessential example, is that it helps many students achieve high scores on high-stakes tests—the university entrance examination. While parents and students consider shadow education a *sine qua non*, educational authorities and the media appear to have disparaged its value. This is because they

believe it has destroyed the essence of true education; tutorial schools are profiteering rather than genuinely empowering (Mahmud and Bray, 2017). In fact, research should be conducted to better understand this educational phenomenon that might stay in the Thai education system for years to come (Hayes, 2010; Hayes, 2017). In summary, it leads the researchers to find out the reasons why many students and parents believe if they study at tutoring schools, they will get more opportunities to get into a famous school or university.

## **2. Objective:**

To investigate the influencing factors affecting students' English learning experiences in shadow education during their secondary school education.

## **3. Research Question:**

What are the students' perspectives towards shadow education in general and English language tutorials in particular?

## **4. Literature Review**

### **4.1 Thai Education System**

The Thai education system is supported by the Ministry of Education. Thai students can take free basic education for fifteen years – from kindergarten (early year education) to upper-secondary school (basic education). Thai education is divided into three systems – formal education, non-formal education and informal education (Ministry of Education, 2008). Formal education is divided into three stages – early year education, basic education and higher education. The early year education is for children between 3 and 5 years of age. Basic education consists of six years of primary schooling (Prathom 1 to 6), three years of lower secondary (Mattayom 1 to 3) and three years of upper secondary (Mattayom 4 to 6). At the end of Mattayom 6, students have to pass an admission exam to continue their studies at universities and colleges. When the students finish their lower secondary level, they can select the school type they would like to join further between the upper secondary (basic education) and vocational and technical education. Specifically, the participants of this study were upper-secondary students who were planning to further their studies in a university rather than in vocational or technical education.

### **4.2 Private Tutoring (Shadow Education)**

Shadow education has three components as follows: 1) supplementation, 2) private-ness, and 3) academic subjects. In fact, according to Bray and Lykins (2012), shadow education "... is concerned with tutoring in academic subjects that is provided for a fee and that takes place outside school hours" (p. 1). As previously mentioned, shadow education is an educational phenomenon that is ubiquitous in Asia. Given the importance of private tutoring, Wai-Ho Yung (2015) conducted a study investigating the experiences and reflections of Chinese learners who had attended an English private tutoring class. After interviewing the 14 students, the author found that the participants had ambivalent attitudes toward the private tutoring school. That is, the participants did not find the private tutorial school a proper way of educating young minds, although they had realized that private tutoring is indispensable. The researcher concluded that for the world of shadow education, such as private tutoring, to be thoroughly understood, more research should be conducted to address this issue that is tightly embedded in a particular sociocultural condition.

In line with Wai-Ho Yung (2015), Zhan et al. (2013) reported on a study that they conducted with a view to examining Hong Kong students' perceptions of the effectiveness of private supplementary tutoring. Using survey and interview data, the researchers found that the participants found private tutoring more effective than mainstream schooling, especially in regard to high-stakes examinations, although those perceptions seemed to vary from one participant to the next, depending on each individual participant's academic levels and motives for taking private tutoring.

As for the role of private tutoring in another Asian context, Hamid et al. (2009) conducted a mixed methods study delving into the roles of private tutoring in English in terms of its nature and practice in a disadvantaged rural area of Bangladesh. Specifically, the study focused on students' scholastic achievement in English, their attitudes and motivations and outcomes. A most prominent finding reported is that the participants found private tutoring imperative for successful learning achievement; several factors came into play here, such as social, psychological and institutional factors. The authors also suggested that if the teaching of English in mainstream schooling is to be successful, it must take into consideration the strengths of private tutoring.

On a more global scale, Ireson and Rushforth (2011) explored the views of English parents and students toward private tutoring. They did a survey study, administering a questionnaire to more than 3,000 students in England in hopes of finding the nature and extent of private tutoring at three points of transition in the English education system. Major findings reported are that the respondents believed there were clear relationships between tutoring and family socio-economic status and cultural background. Concerning the parents, they employed tutors to increase their child's confidence, improve their understanding of the subject and

help them do well in tests and examinations. Clearly, the respondents saw the value of private tutoring almost at the expense of mainstream schooling.

To provide a panoramic view of private tutoring in East Asia, Dawson (2010) examined private tutoring systems in Japan, South Korea and Cambodia, focusing on the systems with formal education systems well in place in those countries. It was found that, for each of the countries, private tutoring was meant to address the inadequacies of formal schooling in helping students to cope with high-stakes examinations successfully. Indeed, this study emphasized the importance of private tutoring in completely understanding mass education and equal opportunity.

### ***4.3 Private Tutoring and Language Education***

Tutoring school study in language education in Asia is largely for the English language as it is the most common interlanguage in the world. English tutoring school is pervasive and popular in the east and the south of Asia, such as China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the Philippines, Russia, India, Bangladesh and many other countries. Some students study English at tutoring schools with the hope of getting a good score on a national standard test, in their school exams, or even just passing those exams. Most of them also aim to get a good score on the tests required for further study in western countries, such as TOEFL and IELTS, while some students study at tutoring schools in preparation for international programs or English program study. Many countries in Asia pay much attention to English tutoring school study. For example, in Japan, the English private tutoring market is large and demonstrated in a lot of various types of institutions – eikaiwa (English conversation school), Juku (tutoring school) and Yobiko (tutoring school). For students who have left school but still want an additional class to prepare themselves for an examination, Yobiko is your answer. English subject is required in most university faculties, so English is one of the subjects most juku teach. There is obviously a large number of students who go to study English in juku, with the most common reason being for getting a good score in the university entrance examination and occasionally for their knowledge of the language (O'Donnell, 2003 as cited in Lowen, 2015).

### ***4.4 Private Tutoring in the Asian and Thai Context***

In Thailand, tutoring school study is popular at all student levels, especially high school students. Some tutoring schools use marketing strategies to attract student attention, and they choose to study at those tutoring schools via various kinds of benefits and activities, such as the discount for students enrolling in a lot of courses, the benefits from member registration, the convenience to study at any tutoring school branches, creating lots of exciting activities to make the students feel they are a part of the tutoring school (e.g. singing contest, quiz competition and star contest) and creating good atmosphere in the school by decorating the place in a relaxing theme. There are many factors that make the students choose each tutoring school – for the increased understanding of their lessons, the faster thinking methods and special techniques, the confidence in exam preparation, the guidelines for the exam, and so on. There are other factors that are not related to the content of the lessons or teaching and learning, such as the influence of friends or parents and the price and the promotion of the course (Napompech, 2011).

### ***4.5 Factors Influencing Students' Decisions to Attend Tutoring School***

In some countries, for instance, South Korea and Greece, tutoring has been a regular practice for large parts of the student population for many decades. Elsewhere, such as in Thailand and various Northern-European countries, the use of private supplementary tutoring appears to be undergoing a gradual transition from a relatively marginal phenomenon to an institutionalized educational practice.

Private supplementary tutoring provides students with additional instruction or guidance in subjects that are part of the formal curriculum (Bray, 2010). By providing additional training and support, shadow education can help to boost school performance, either by providing remediation when students are – or risk – lagging behind (Baker et al., 2001) or by further enhancing students' school performance in their quest to stay ahead of other students (Entrich and Lauterbach, 2019). On the other hand, many students have a high degree of anxiety about college entrance exams and their anxiety level is elevated more when parents add their interest to see colorful high grades (Popa and Acedo, 2006).

Napompech (2011) found in her study that the reasons for bringing Thai junior and senior high school students to attend tutoring classes were to increase lesson comprehension, get some shortcut thinking methods and techniques, prepare for an exam and get the guidelines for an exam. People that were influenced by the participants in this research on studying at tutoring school were friends, parents or guardians, seniors, teachers at school and the students themselves. The subjects that students decided to study at tutoring school were Mathematics, English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology and others. The course expense was another factor concerning the students' decision to study at a tutoring school. Most students agreed to study a course which costs between 2,001 and 3,000 Thai baht per course. Most students selected the tutoring schools they attended from their friends' suggestions. The

research also stated that most students travelled to tutoring school by sky train, and the studying time for tutoring school that most students selected was on Saturday.

## **5. Methodology**

### **5.1 The Participants**

At present, shadow education is a part of mainstream society, especially for grade 10-12 students. Since class sizes are simply too big, with limited time to teach an increasingly information-heavy curriculum and pressure to prepare students for standardized tests, shadow education - unavoidable in Thailand - plays an enormous role in a student's academic life because it helps students of all ages master the curriculum, teaches valuable study skills and provides the personalized instruction many students need to thrive.

The participants were 140 students. They studied in grades 10-12 and obtained Science-mathematics majors, Mathematics-English major, English-Chinese majors, and English-Japanese majors at Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University in academic year 1/2022. The participants work hard to improve their grades, and shadow education, of course, is an important goal for them.

### **5.2 Method of Data Collection**

The study was survey research conducted in the first semester of the 2022 academic year using Google Forms via Line Application.

There were nine classes of grades 10-12, and all grade 10-12 students were required to answer the questionnaire. Before the survey, the researchers explained the objective of the study and asked grade 10-12 students to do the survey via Line Application. The researcher allowed students to do the survey before the English classes ended, which took about 10 minutes.

### **5.3 Instruments of Data Collection**

The Google form questionnaire was applied to explore the views, experiences, and beliefs in shadow education of grade 10-12 students. The Google form questionnaire is divided into four sections:

Part 1: General Information

Part 2: Have you ever attended the English tutorial class outside of school

Part 3: Why attending English tutorial classes outside school is important?

Part 4: According to the school curriculum, which topics/fields would you add to improve your English language skills?

The Google form questionnaire used in this study was designed in English version because students' English proficiency is good. The construction procedures followed these sequences: First, a variety of related research, books, and journals concerned with shadow education were reviewed. Next, one English teacher and five students from grades 10-12 were interviewed to elicit English use. Then, information from these interviews and reviews of related research, books, and journals were used to provide a guideline in the initial draft of the questionnaire. After that, a pilot study was conducted with six students from grades 10-12 before the Google form questionnaire was used in the main study. The participants of this study were requested to fill out the questionnaires, comment on the content and wording, and give suggestions on items that should be added or excluded. Finally, the final draft of the questionnaire was revised before it was distributed via Line Application to grade 10-12 students at Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, in the academic year 1/2022.

### **5.4 Method of Data Analysis**

The sequences applied to analyze the data are as follows: The results of the Google form questionnaire were interpreted, categorized and tabulated on computer sheets and were calculated into the statistical values as follows:

(a) The data concerning students' general information, experiences in attending tutorial class, and opinions of the school curriculum was presented in Percentage.

(b) A five-point Likert scale was used to score the levels of the importance of tutorial class. It is a scale used in questionnaires to specify the level of agreement or disagreement based on the following criteria of Rensis Likert (1932):

Scale	Opinion	Mean Range
5	Very high level of agreement	4.50 - 5.00
4	High level of agreement	3.50 - 4.49
3	Medium level of agreement	2.50 - 3.49
2	Low level of agreement	1.50 - 2.49
1	Very low level of agreement	1.00 - 1.49

(c) Mean was used to interpret the average importance of the tutorial class of grade 10-12 students based on the criteria of John W. Best (1970). The higher mean score of each activity indicates higher agreement. On the other hand, the lower mean score indicates less agreement in performing the same activity.

The results and findings were presented in tables and figures together with full explanations.

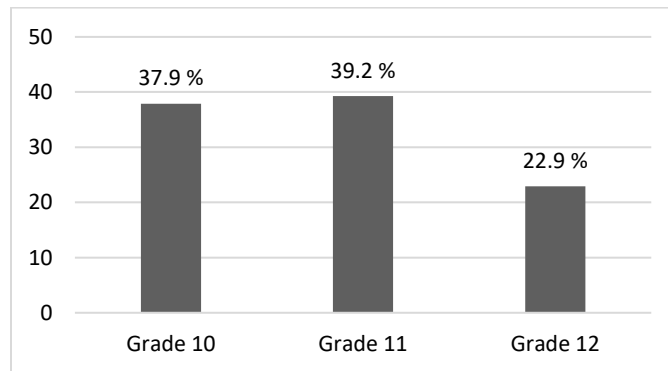
**6. Findings and Discussion**

This chapter presents the data collected from grade 10-12 students obtaining Science-mathematics majors, Mathematics-English majors, English-Chinese majors, and English-Japanese majors at Wat Phrasimhadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University in academic year 1/2022. The results were based on the data obtained by using the questionnaire (Google Form). The results from the questionnaire (Google Form) were presented in four parts as follows:

- 1) General information
  - 1.1 Grade Level
  - 1.2 Major
- 2) Have you ever attended the English tutorial class outside school?
- 3) Why attending English tutorial classes outside school is important?
- 4) According to the school curriculum, which topics/fields would you add to improve your English language skills?

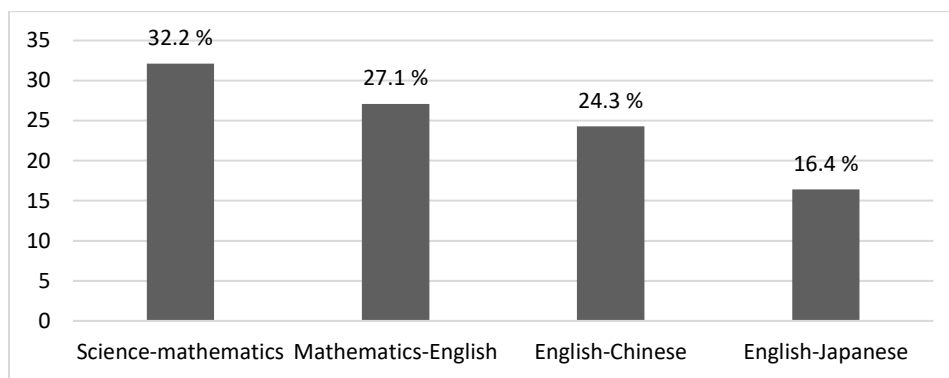
**1) General Information**

This part indicates the general information concerning the demographic data of grade 10-12 students. The results were shown based on the questionnaire as follows:



**Figure 1 Grade**

As shown in Figure 1, there were 140 students answered a mandatory questionnaire in Google form. The majority of the students (39.2%) studied in grade 11, which was slightly higher than grade 10 students (37.9%). The number of grade 12 students was the smallest (22.9%); this could be because they ignored receiving an invitation by Google form. Even though the researcher reminded them more than two times, the number of participants still was lower than in other grades. Moreover, some of them might think the questionnaire didn't seem interesting or appealing to answer because they were asked to participate in the teachers' research from grade 7.

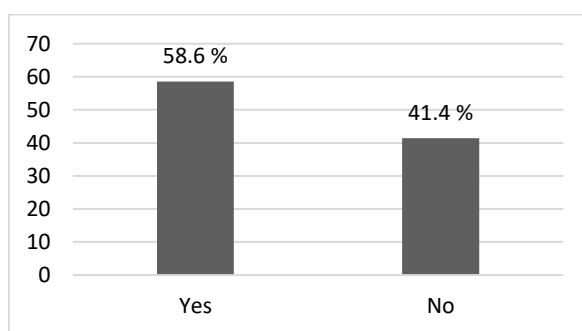


**Figure 2 Major**

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the students (32.2% and 27.1%) out of 140 students studying in science-mathematics major and mathematics-English. This could be because those two majors consist of about 45 students each major, while English-Chinese major and English-Japanese majors consist of about 25 students each major.

**2) Have you ever attended the English tutorial class outside school?**

This part indicates the experiences concerning the English tutorial class outside the school of grade 10-12 students. The results were shown based on the questionnaire as follows:



**Figure 3 Attending the English Tutorial Class outside School**

In Figure 3, the majority of the students (58.6%) have attended the English Tutorial class outside school, while 41.4% of them have never attended. It could be said that many students have attended the English tutorial class outside school because the class can enable students to learn on demand and when they are motivated, it can be done independently of time and geography, and experts can devise tutorials, even though they are located at different institutions.

**Part 3: Why attending English tutorial classes outside school is important?**

This part indicates the importance of the English tutorial class outside the school of grade 10-12 students. The results were shown based on the questionnaire as follows:

**Table 1 The Importance of English Tutorial Class**

No.	Criteria	$\bar{x}$	Mean Range
1	The amount of school class duration is not enough to learn all the necessary content.	3.41	Medium level of agreement
2	To prepare for the Thai University Center Admission System (TCAS).	<b>4.63</b>	<b>Very high level of agreement</b>
3	To prepare for the specific test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, GED, TOEIC, OPI and OPIC, Cambridge Exams, TU-GET and CU-TEP.	<b>4.58</b>	<b>Very high level of agreement</b>
4	To get a better grade in English subjects.	4.45	High level of agreement
5	To improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills.	<b>4.56</b>	<b>Very high level of agreement</b>

6	To improve ability in vocabulary and grammar use.	<b>4.51</b>	<b>Very high level of agreement</b>
7	To keep up with your friends in the lessons.	3.31	Medium level of agreement
8	Your friends are studying there.	<b>1.21</b>	<b>Very low level of agreement</b>
9	Your parents advise you to.	4.09	High level of agreement
10	It is cool and fashionable.	<b>1.36</b>	<b>Very low level of agreement</b>

The results were presented in the average number based on the criteria of Rensis Likert (1932) as follows:

The average number is a very high level of agreement in 1) To prepare for the Thai University Center Admission System (TCAS) (4.63), 2) To prepare for the specific test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, GED, TOEIC, OPI and OPIC, Cambridge Exams, TU-GET and CU-TEP (4.58), 3) To improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (4.56), and 4) To improve ability in vocabulary and grammar use (4.51). It could be said that because of this non-avoidable diversity of languages, English has been acknowledged as the primary medium for education in many renowned and prestigious Universities. That's why learning English has become such a crucial necessity for another step towards academic success in life. All the aspects of the English language, especially reading and writing, are important elements for admission success. The majority of universities have adopted English as their primary medium of learning and education. Moreover, international universities accept students with different languages as their mother tongue from all over the world.

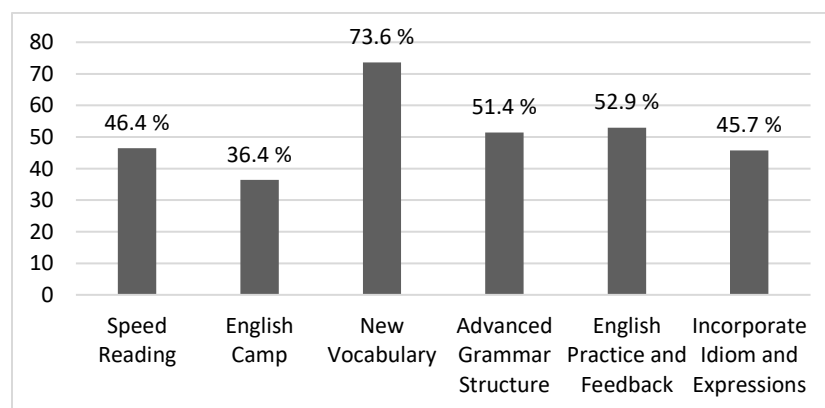
The average number is a high level of agreement in 1) To get a better grade in English subjects (4.45), and 2) Your parents advise you to (4.09).

The average number is a medium level of agreement in 1) The amount of school class duration is not enough to learn all the necessary content (3.41), and 2) To keep up with your friends in the lessons (3.31).

On the contrary, it is cool and fashionable (1.36), and your friends studying there (1.21) are at a very low level of agreement. This might be because the majority of the admission tests that universities conduct are taken in which the skills and competence of the examinee over the English language are tested, which is acknowledged as qualification criteria. Strong scores in English language proficiency tests are basic qualifying criteria for admission to top universities. Therefore, learning English plays an important role in academic purposes.

**Part :4According to the school curriculum, which topics/fields would you add to improve your English language skills?**

This part indicates topics/fields to improve the English language skills of grade 12-10students. The results were shown based on the questionnaire as follows:



**Figure 4 Topics/Fields to Improve English Language Skills**

Figure 4 shows that new vocabulary (73.6%) should be strongly emphasized in further English courses. This could be because vocabulary is the foundation of language, and a robust vocabulary improves all areas of communication. Expanding students' knowledge of new vocabulary provides unlimited access to new information. When students have a wider vocabulary in their target language, it also helps support all four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking. Furthermore, English practice and feedback (52.9%), advanced grammar structure (51.4%), and speeding reading (46.4%) were also considered to be important for the training courses.



## 7. Discussion of Major Findings

The first part of this section discusses the information of the participants. The experiences concerning the English tutorial class, the importance of the English tutorial class and topics/fields to improve English language skills will be presented based on the questionnaire as follows:

There were 140 students answering the mandatory questionnaire in Google form.

The majority of the students studied in grades 10 (37.9%) and 11 (39.2%).

The majority of the students out of 140 students studied science-mathematics major (32.2%) because the pressure for today's students to study further in the university has led to the growth of shadow education – tutoring schools, especially students who studied related to mathematics or science. Many students have a high degree of anxiety about college entrance exams, and their anxiety level is elevated more when parents add their interest to see colorful high grades (Popa and Acedo, 2006).

According to ThaiRath, in 2014, 60.2% of Thai high school students said that they took various courses because they struggled to understand what was being taught in schools and that what was being taught in school didn't correspond with what was on entrance exams, unlike what was taught in tutorials. Napompech (2011) also pointed out that the reasons for bringing Thai junior and senior high school students to attend tutoring classes were to increase lesson comprehension, get some shortcut thinking methods and techniques, prepare for an exam and get the guidelines for an exam.

The majority of the students (58.6%) have attended the English tutorial class outside school. Since private tutoring is a growing phenomenon in the world (Bray and Silova, 2006), private tutoring has been deeply rooted in East Asian cultures, which can be seen in many East Asian societies, including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea (Bray, 2003). Many students, especially in Thailand, attended private tutoring because of many factors, such as a lack of quality language input, a limited opportunity to use English in daily life, poor instruction delivered by unqualified local teachers and so on (Nunan, 2003). Moreover, Dawson (2010) examined private tutoring systems in Japan, South Korea and Cambodia, focusing on the systems with formal education systems well in place in those countries. It was found that private tutoring was meant to address the inadequacies of formal schooling in helping students to cope with high-stakes examinations successfully.

Bray (2013) claims that private tutoring is understood as a natural element of mainstream schooling. For example, 80% of students in grade 10 received tutoring in China. 85.5% of senior secondary students had received tutoring in Hong Kong. Similarly, in the Republic of Korea, 60.5% of students in general high school received tuition. Likewise, in the Philippines, 46.5% of grade 10 students received tutoring (Bray and Lykins, 2012, p. 6). English plays a crucial role in many examinations. In Japan, the English private tutoring market is large and demonstrated in a lot of various types of institutions – eikaiwa (English conversation school), Juku (tutoring school) and Yobiko (tutoring school). There is obviously a large number of students who go to study English in juku, with the most common reason being for getting a good score in the university entrance examination and occasionally for their knowledge of the language (O'Donnell, 2003 as cited in Lowen, 2015).

The important reasons students attended the English tutorial class were 1) To prepare for the Thai University Center Admission System (TCAS), 2) To prepare for the specific test, such as TOEFL, IELTS, GED, TOEIC, OPI and OPIC, Cambridge Exams, TU-GET and CU-TEP, 3) To improve listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, 4) To improve ability in vocabulary and grammar use, 5) To get a better grade in English subjects, and 6) Their parents advise them.

Although Thais studied English for at least two hundred years (Trakulkasemsuk, 2018), it has regularly been reported in various mass media that the English language proficiency of Thais, in general, is below standard. This shadow education (Bray et al., 2013; Dawson, 2010; Hamid et al., 2009; Ireson and Rushforth, 2011) has become an essential component of the education system, and Thailand is no exception. Many Thai students study English at private tutoring more because private supplementary tutoring provides students with additional instruction or guidance in subjects that are part of the formal curriculum (Bray, 2010). By providing additional training and support, shadow education can help to boost school performance, either by providing remediation when students are – or risk – lagging behind (Baker et al., 2001) or by further enhancing students' school performance in their quest to stay ahead of other students (Entrich and Lauterbach, 2019).

To be achieved in learning English, private tutoring provides more effective learning methods. In line with Wai-Ho Yung (2015), Zhan et al. (2013) reported on a study that they conducted with a view to examining Hong Kong students' perceptions of the effectiveness of private supplementary tutoring. Using survey and interview data, the researchers found that the participants found private tutoring more effective than mainstream schooling, especially in regard to high-stakes examinations. Also, Hamid et al. (2009) conducted a study delving into the roles of private tutoring in English in terms of its nature and practice in a disadvantaged

rural area of Bangladesh. Specifically, the study focused on students' scholastic achievement in English, their attitudes and motivations and outcomes. A most prominent finding reported is that the participants found private tutoring imperative for successful learning achievement; several factors came into play here, such as social, psychological and institutional factors.

New vocabulary (73.6%), English practice and feedback (52.9%), advanced grammar structure (51.4%), and speeding reading (46.4%) should be strongly emphasized in the further English courses because these factors make the students choose each tutoring school – for the increased understanding of their lessons, the faster thinking methods and special techniques, the confidence in exam preparation, the guidelines for the exam, and so on (Napompech, 2011).

On a more global scale, Ireson and Rushforth (2011) explored the views of English parents and students toward private tutoring. Concerning the parents, they employed tutors to increase their child's confidence, improve their understanding of the subject and help them do well in tests and examinations. Clearly, the respondents saw the value of private tutoring almost at the expense of mainstream schooling.

### **8. Limitations of the Study**

1. The study is based on a small sample of informants. 140 students studying in grades 10-12 at Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, completed the questionnaire via Google Form. The findings cannot be generalized in a large sample and territory because of the small sample size and the limited amount of data from the questionnaire. Even though the informants are not enough to be suitable representatives of the whole population of Thai upper-secondary school students, this group of the sample is big enough to provide the readers with some glimpse of what is actually happening regarding the issue of student choices in private tutoring

2. Views from parents and students could elucidate the participants' arguments about the roles of shadow education.

### **9. Implications of the Study**

There are inadequate numbers of studies related to private tutoring even though it has long rooted tradition along with mainstream schooling in Thailand. It is essential to understand the nature and consequences of private tutoring in order to make educational reform in Thai schools, especially for senior high-school.

Thailand has experienced various educational experiments in the name of policy reformations in education many times. However, the upgrading level of education remained always problematic. Moreover, the authorities have not paid serious attention towards the system of private tutoring. Therefore, there is an urgent need to rethink the school education system. The findings in this study can be helpful in reforming existing educational policy on the practice of school education as well, as it is crucial to pay attention to education policy and plan to reduce the adverse effect of shadow-education in Thailand.

### **10. Recommendations for Further Studies**

Given the limitation of this study that consisted of grade 10-12 students at Wat Phrasrimahadhat Secondary Demonstration School, Phranakhon Rajabhat University, future research might center a wider scale among grade 10-12 students of the *demonstration schools of Rajabhat University*. Also, data should be garnered from other stakeholders, such as parents and the general public. A large-scale comparative study focusing on private tutoring in other countries in the region might contribute to a better understanding of shadow education in Thailand. In terms of data collection, a mixed-methods approach might yield more fruitful results, shedding light on other subtleties that are inherent in this educational phenomenon.

The education establishment in any part of the world is just beginning to appreciate shadow education as an important dimension of the modern schooling process. We are beginning to understand shadow education as an important dimension of parental involvement and as a modern schooling process. More research is needed to produce systematic knowledge about the various ways in which shadow education might influence educational outcomes and educational processes.

Future research on shadow education should look at the possible impact that shadow education has on the operations and policy formation in national systems of public education.

### **11. Conclusion**

Private tutoring plays an important role for students in their academic subjects of mainstream schooling. The continuously rising trend of students attending tutoring school, not only in Thailand but also in many other countries in Asia, can lead to problems which reflex the public education policy. This study aimed to find the importance of tutoring school influencing grade 10-12 students and have found that students attend tutoring school to prepare themselves for university admission examination, and in

the language field, students also attend tutoring class for the same main reason. However, the preparation for the university admission examination is not the only reason leading students to join English classes at tutoring schools; students want to improve their English competency to get a better grade at school, preparing themselves before moving to a higher grade and applying English knowledge in their everyday life, not just for an exam. Moreover, one of the important reasons the students study English at tutoring school is they want to improve their grammar and vocabulary skills.

At present, shadow education is developed into a part of Thai education and will continue to move along with education expansion. As reported on the Bangkok Post's website, the tuition industry in Thailand has grown to over 10 billion-baht (over £200 million), involving 500,000 students because the competition to get a university place in Thailand is strongly tough. In order to try to solve the problem of unqualified teaching and learning in school, the problems result from several factors, including culture in Thai society, politics, administration of school services, education financing, the budget allocation process, budget management, the usage of education resources, examinations and accreditation, and teacher management and classroom conduct should be resolved. The major problem mentioned must be solved in order to reduce the negative impact on the quality of education and on students' learning skills.

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