

# Socialism in English Studies: Perspectives, Pedagogy, and Research Topics

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## บทคัดย่อ

แนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยม (Socialism) เป็นแนวคิดที่ผูกโยงสาขาหลักของสาขาภาษาอังกฤษศึกษา (English Studies) อันได้แก่ วรรณคดี การเขียน ภาษาศาสตร์ และทฤษฎีการสอน เข้าไว้ด้วยกัน โดยหลักสำคัญของแนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยมนี้คือ การเปลี่ยนจากแนวคิดที่ว่าเอกบุคลหรือมนุษย์แต่ละคนสามารถใช้ความสามารถส่วนตัวและสติปัญญาของตนเองในการพัฒนาตนเอง หรือยกระดับความคิดของตนเองให้เป็นผู้เจริญออกมาได้ไปสู่แนวคิดที่ว่ามนุษย์เป็นสัตว์สังคมและความรู้ต่างๆ นั้นถูกสร้างโดยสังคมนั้น การทำความเข้าใจแนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยมนี้มีความสำคัญและเป็นประโยชน์อย่างมาก เพราะจะทำให้ผู้ศึกษาเข้าใจแนวคิดหรือปรัชญาที่แฝงอยู่ในการพัฒนาองค์ความรู้ที่เป็นแกนของสาขานี้ รวมถึงทำให้มองเห็นความสัมพันธ์ของสาขานี้กับสาขาอื่นๆ ซึ่งจะเป็นประโยชน์ในการพัฒนาแขนงความรู้ใหม่ๆ ขึ้น หรือทำให้เกิดมุมมองใหม่ๆ มากขึ้น นอกจากนี้การศึกษามากของแนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยมยังทำให้ผู้ศึกษาได้รู้การอภิปรายในหลากหลายหัวข้อ รวมไปถึงประเด็นโต้แย้งต่างๆ ซึ่งจะทำให้ผู้ศึกษาได้เกิดมุมมองใหม่ ตลอดจนสามารถคิดหัวข้อวิจัยใหม่ๆ ได้หลากหลาย ผู้ศึกษาแนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยมยังสามารถใช้แนวคิดนี้เป็นรากฐานหรือเป็นคำอธิบายสนับสนุนงานวิจัยของตน สำหรับผู้สอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศการศึกษาแนวคิดนี้จะนำไปสู่คำศัพท์สำคัญใหม่ๆ และการเชื่อมโยงคำศัพท์เหล่านั้นกับแนวคิดต่างๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับแนวคิดแบบนิยมสังคมนิยมจะทำให้เกิดความรู้ใหม่และนำไปสู่หัวข้อวิจัยใหม่ๆ

One should benefit a great deal from just studying how the term “socialism” or “pluralism” has emerged in the field of English Studies. English Studies is a broad field, but the term socialism might very well represent the relationship among its major subfields. This term has, in fact, come out from attempts to define the human subject. “Socialism” is clear in its meaning, a policy or

practice aimed at the happiness of many people. Simple as it may seem, there are many topics or issues circulating around it, and from the study of these interrelated topics one can have a sketch of English Studies. This is because if one traces this word back to where it comes from, one will see that it is implicitly involved in many movements inside each subfield of English Studies and thus learn many interesting issues along the movements.

One of my two purposes in this essay is to point out that all major subfields of English Studies Literature, Composition, Pedagogy, and Linguistics explicitly share now the notion that learning and teaching are social activities. One would think that this idea is an all-time fact and that there is nothing much to talk about it. Wrong! Most of the discussions about the movements from individualism to socialism involve theories and methodologies one may apply to doing research. In the movement from current-traditional rhetoric to social-epistemic rhetoric in the field of Composition, for example, one can view the writer as “the object of evaluation,” “the owner or center of the discourse,” or “a person learning from as well as affected by society.” Thus, a researcher can observe or investigate a novice writer from one or all of these points of view. In a writing classroom, the teacher may apply one view in the first half of the semester and another view in the second half and see what happens. Still, there are many other issues or aspects one can draw out from these three approaches to the writer.

Therefore, aside from my argument that socialism is a concept now shared by all major subfields of English Studies, my second job in this essay (that I will attempt to do) is to suggest some possible research topics perceivable from the chaotic as well as overlapping issues or details or discussions (whatever we may call them) inside English Studies. This essay will move from giving a short philosophical review about the creation of the subject by some well-known philosophers. I will introduce two big terms: modernism and postmodernism because I see that the move from modernism to postmodernism represents the transfer from individualism to socialism. This short philosophical explanation will serve as a basis for understanding not only

the term socialism but other related issues to be discussed as well. Then I will discuss the term socialism in each subfield, and finally give a conclusion.

It is hoped that this essay opens new doors for teachers of EFL writing, for their discussion and research. This essay should be useful for EFL teachers in general and EFL writing teachers in particular. In our society, EFL teachers, probably gear their teaching more toward increasing students' language competence than toward investigating how students learn the language, understand it, and apply it in natural settings, or how a teaching method affects students, or how a teaching material improves students' learning or expands their worldly knowledge. This essay should serve as a forum for teachers to think about new ways to do research beyond the teaching of the body of the language.

### **The Human Subject: A Philosophical Background**

From Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, and René Descartes to later thinkers such as Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Richard Rorty, we see two types of human subjects: modern and postmodern. Kant, a philosopher hoping for the age known as modernity, defines his subject as rational, critical, independent, and self-determining (Eagleton. 1990) The Cartesian subject is autonomous; Descartes, the owner of the famous saying "I think, therefore I am," believes that certainty and knowledge begins with the self (Bressler. 2003) Kant, Mill, and Descartes are modern<sup>1</sup> thinkers who believe that the human subject possesses transcendental ability, ability for finding knowledge and understanding the universals that govern the world. Based on these theorists' definitions of the subject, the subject of modernity is often described as "a sovereign subject taking itself to be the sole guarantor of the meaning of [the] process" (Readings. 1996) "the locus of intentionality" (Martin. 1992) "individualistic" (Biesecker. 1997) and "an end in itself" (Biesta. 1995)

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<sup>1</sup> This word "modern" is used as the adjective of modernism, as opposed to "postmodern."

Strickland (2005) points out that there is a contradiction about the modern subject, about whether it should be educated more toward individualism or normalization. If it is for individualism, the subject should be taught to use transcendental thinking to exalt itself (for a higher social status) and to become individually enlightened. If it is for normalization, the subject should be educated to be a quality citizen of a culture, that is, to be part of a civilized society. But whatever education is for, individualism or normalization, we could say that modern education aims at cultivating not only independent individuals rational and self-determining on their own but also “universal” subjects who can live together in peace, who can help preserve the culture and develop the society. Note at this point that our educational system in Thailand follows this kind of education for the most part, with competition and emphasis on individual success. Everyone is supposed to learn and grow in knowledge by themselves. The education of monks, which emphasizes solitude, is a good example.

One important aspect of the modern subject is power and control. Modern subjects are rational, educated, and self-determining, so they can create totalizing systems or grand narratives that control powerless groups. In a society, signs of control and power resulting from the quest for a modern, enlightened society can be seen everywhere in schools, hospitals, universities, etc. In all modern institutions, there are both those who control others and those who are under control. In schools, systems and rules are often established for the benefits of administrators and teachers, not for students. Thus, although the founding ideologies of modernity are good, it can sometimes be said that the modern society is not ethical or just, for it allows some people (modern subjects) to control others. Modern discourses are often accused of creating suppressive hierarchies (Giroux. 1991)

The second type of human subjects, the postmodern subject, has not been as clearly defined as the modern subject. But one can roughly define the postmodern subject from the way the term postmodern is used or articulated. Faigley (1992: 3) states that postmodernity is the time when the world is moving more and more toward randomness, dissolution, ambiguity, cataclysm,

and chaos. All these conditions now seem to appear in the work of many artists, musicians, choreographers, film makers, and architects, and in the productions of advertisers, fashion designers, sports promoters, and politicians. Next, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 3) elaborate on postmodernism in technological advances, explaining that “[a]dvances in information technology, mainly communications media, underline both economic and cultural transformations, opening up new forms of experience and knowledge and new possibilities of relationships with faraway others via television and internet.” Finally, in “Postmodernism,” McGowan (1994: 586) a theorist of literary theory and criticism, points to new writers’ lack of high seriousness, their apparent contempt for well-made, unified literary work, and their addiction to popular culture. McGowan explicates that postmodernism values heterogeneity over unity, and postmodernism populism “opens the door to heterogeneous voices, mixed genres, and other breaches of decorum.”

From this short information above about postmodernism, we learn that the postmodern subject is not a coherent self, not the cause of culture, but the effect of it. The subject now is viewed not as independent but as dependent and learning from others. In other words, it is impossible now for a person to have a completely solitary life, or to use transcendental or cognitive abilities to obtain knowledge, and it is impossible for a state nation to stay without contact with others. Knowledge is now regarded as socially constructed. The subject must learn from others. But one thing to note is the less enthusiasm of the subject in political critique and engagement. In this age of technology, according to Harvey (1991) the postmodern subject are lost in fantasies and distractions and care less about the well-being of the society, which may be a harm to the society.

Thus, the shift in philosophy about the human subject is the result of seeing the subject as a social being and knowledge as socially constructed. In the age of postmodernity, voices of minority groups are heard, and new branches of studies have come up, such as feminism, disabilities studies, queer theory, globalization studies, genocide and trauma studies, orientalism, and diasporas studies. In addition, there are more research topics to create knowledge, such as

the study of multicultural dimensions of international communication, the study of globalizational English, and the study of English in a contact zone. All of these come from the notion that knowledge is socially constructed. EFL teachers can certainly do research on those topics. To exemplify, the teacher of EN 292 (Language Use) at Srinakharinwirot University may do research into English as used in Bangkok, an intercultural context. The above explanation about the move from modernism to postmodernism should provide the EFL teacher with a philosophical explanation for a research project, for instance, for why a writing teacher will teach creativity using literary texts or outside sources.

### **Socialism in English Studies: Perspectives and Research Topics**

The above short philosophical explanation, directed toward socialism, should be a springboard or a shortcut for one to decipher the concept of socialism as well as the connections in the major areas of English Studies. By understanding the concept of socialism, one is also provided with a background to comprehend the connection between English Studies and other studies, such as orientalism and disabilities studies. A look into how socialism ties the major subfields is useful if one wants to make use of this concept to expand to other areas from English Studies. In reality, students of English Studies often extend their study to a field outside English Studies from one of these subfields. For example, a student of composition studies may investigate writings and rhetorics of disabled women or writing styles of philosophers in the Oriental world as opposed to those of Western philosophers.

I will try to relate most of the research topics I am suggesting to socialism. Sometimes my readers may feel that my connecting is arbitrary, however. In that case, they do not have to agree with me. Also, from a topic I suggest, one may think of different terms that may be used as research variables. At some points I may suggest a topic without explaining how it might be related to socialism. After all, the audience of this paper is EFL teachers and graduate students, so, perhaps, gearing toward socialism only may not be applicable for some of them.

## Composition

In Composition, the move to socialism is clear. This can be simply seen in the different rhetorics and pedagogies applied in this area. Fulkerson (1979) divides practitioners of composition studies into four camps: mimetic, expressive, formalist, and rhetorical. Berlin (1997) illustrates four main pedagogical groups: the Neo-Aristotelians or Classicists, the Positivists or Current-Traditionalists, the Neo-Platonists or Expressionists, and the New Rhetoricians. In Berlin (1987)'s *Rhetoric and Reality*, four main groups are identified: current-traditional, expressivist, cognitivist, and epistemic. In *Writing Instruction*, Berlin (1984) uses the term “romantic” for “expressivist” to refer to the writer as the center of knowing (p.10). Faigley (1986) identifies three views or trends: expressive, cognitive, and social. McComiskey (2000) points out three levels of writing that signify pedagogical methods: textual, rhetorical, and discursive.

In the classifications of those theorists, one can roughly see the move from the unified, independent subject to the social, dependent subject. For example, in Aristotelian rhetoric, knowledge is thought of as established truths, and learning is deductive; thus, the learner must use cognitive and transcendental ability to find knowledge. Similarly, current-traditional rhetoric emphasizes cognitive ability; the writing of this rhetoric focuses on arrangement and style in order to catch the audience. In expressionist rhetoric, the emphasis is on “the authentic voice.” Writers of this rhetoric, however, make use of dialectic conversations with others, but only to get rid of the errors in their logic (Berlin. 1997) One should notice that socialism is incorporated less in current-traditional and more in expressionist. Socialism is adopted more and more in later rhetorics - rhetorical, epistemic, social, and discursive.

In Composition, there are three important teaching paradigms-current-traditional, process, and post-process. Current-traditional focuses on grammar, arrangement, and style, while process writing, applying expressivist rhetoric, gives the most freedom to the writer. Murray (1997: 5-6) proposes process pedagogy, which respects student agency more than anything. The student

“finds his own subject,” “uses his own language,” and “is encouraged to attempt any form of writing,” and “there are no rules, no absolutes, just alternatives.” Finally, post-process pedagogy fully implements the social aspect. McComiskey (2000: 47) replaces the word “post” with “social” and sees post-process theory as an extension of process theory into “the social world of discourse.” McComiskey points out that process methodology is fueled by the obsession with the cognitive, expressivist, and modernist (sovereign) subject, but post-process movement leads to a renewed interest in written products as cultural texts from a variety of verbal and visual media.

In Thailand, the teaching of writing seems to be stuck in the mode of current-traditional; it seems we cannot go further when many of our students still write, for example, “It has many mountains in Chiangmai,” “In that room has two students,” “Money make us can buy...,” and, even worse, “for make give many products up.” As a result, we stress for the most part grammar and organization; the five-paragraph theme is a good example. It is apparent, then, that our education treats students as objects of evaluation and suppresses their agency. To follow more recent trends, therefore, we should move forward from current-traditional pedagogy. We must leave correctness for a while. Grammar is very important, but it should be learned gradually by students themselves.

By ignoring grammar and moving into the social aspect, we might move to do research on pride, agency, subjectivity, verbal power, and so on. We might examine how EFL students create pride in writing and how their pride affects the development of their grammar, or how expressivist pedagogy affects students’ writing power. The following excerpt by an American student, probably taught in expressivist methodology, demonstrates that it is her emotions and word choices, not grammar, that make her writing impressive and powerful, emotions I consider to be the source of love and pride in writing.



I never liked the familie get together things  
because my cousins never really made us feel wanted  
Never made any conversation with my brother sister and I  
Maybe because we talked different I don't know  
But it seems every were I go I always some how feel missed place  
So when I think of sorrow  
It reminds me of a thunder storms  
Because of the colors gray and darkness  
Because of the noises are loud and hectic  
The rain is like some one crying for the answer  
It reminds me of everything bad or sad that has happened to me  
I am thankful for everything because in away when any one makes me feel missed place  
Or unwanted I don't let it get the beast of me because I feel like that has happened to me  
a lot when I was a kid and know times have to change for me and I need to stay strong.

(Wilson. 2006)

Pride, power, voice, and agency are analyzable in texts, and all of these terms are interrelated. If one decides to focus on pride, one may survey the qualities of pride and the qualities that constitute pride in students' writing. One may also study the consequences of pride, for example, how it affects the development of the student as a writer. Or a researcher can expand from pride to power, voice, and agency. Yet, there are many other qualities that may be investigated. In Thailand, as Thai students are more obsessed with grammaticality and pay less attention to audience and purpose, as they do not practice writing with the two concepts in mind in their native language, and as they are not very knowledgeable about the culture of the English

language, it is interesting to study the difficulties they have and the strategies they use to make impressions of audience and purpose. If the students practice writing for an audience and purpose in both Thai and English, what will happen to the quality of students' English writing? Next, it is also interesting to explore the writer-reader codes in the EFL context. Reader-writer codes may be classified into "elaborated codes" (referring to all elements and qualities the writer uses to tie the reader who is unaware of the context) and "restricted codes" (referring to all elements and qualities the writer uses to communicate with the reader who is aware of the context of the writing) (Hirsch, 1977). In Thailand, it would be exciting to study how much students, studying in current-traditional paradigm, express reader-writer codes. Also, one may try to study or compare writer-reader relationships in the writing of students taught with current-traditional pedagogy and those taught with expressivist pedagogy. Finally, think of a piece of writing as an artifact for interpretation, as a thing always analyzable. Broad (2003: 34) in *What We Really Value*, suggests a hundred criteria for assessing writing, for example "Tight/Subtle/Minimalist/ Show Not Tell". Just by looking at a paragraph from a student, one may use this criterion to assess it. There are many other criteria to evaluate. The paragraph from a Thai student below can be discussed in good detail concerning coherence.

### **My Gang**

Every summer, I go to my sister's house to visit my gang. It has four members which consists of my twin brothers, my sister and I. Moreover, we have 3 young girls and 2 young boys that we must take care of them. It was a hard time because they were so naughty and stubborn. When they cried together, we were scared. When we troop, we do some activities together. We like watching the movies, playing games, reading books, and sharing experiences in our university. Sometimes we did not do anything except sitting on the sofa and watching television all day. When our aunt arrived at home, we were scolded by her. We were not angry because we realized that it was a nonsensical activity. However, my gang can not stay together all time, we must go to study. I believe that everybody is looking forward to meeting each another. It will be a happy time for us. See you next summer!!

If compared with the writing of the American student above, this paragraph by a Thai student much less powerful, although it is clear that both students expressed themselves freely. The paragraph by the Thai student is insufficient in coherence, which in turn causes it to lack power. The paragraph is poor because the writer does not use language that can relate to the reader emotionally, there is no clear main point that the writer wants to convey, the writer's agency is dominated by the brothers, sister, and aunt, the sentences do not move smoothly, and so on. Thus, a researcher may study how adopting expressivist pedagogy can affect students' writing in terms of power, agency, and writer-reader relationship.

All topics suggested above are possible research topics in Composition. To some extent, of course, those topics integrate socialism. When we ask students to think about reader-writer relationship, for example, we more or less make them consider the concept of society, or make them absorb the notion that writing is not for the writer or the teacher but for others. When we focus on voice in student writing, it is unavoidable to talk about society and the concept of audience. For all of the topics suggested above, however, the researcher studies only the writer's writing skills, skills for producing a text. To put it another way, the researcher studies the modern subject. Teaching students to think about voice and audience involves applying cognitive and transcendental abilities.

Research in Composition can expand to encompass the notion that learning is socially constructed and that humans are social beings, that is, to study the postmodern subject. Although in process instruction students make use of peer comments, they use the comments basically for improving their writing, not for learning new knowledge. If the researcher takes on the social aspect, he or she will come up with more ideas for investigation. For example, if the researcher still wants to stick to process writing, he or she may encourage commentators to focus on giving knowledge to the writer instead of on correcting grammar or revising unclear ideas or improving writer-reader relationships. Another example is the researcher can study multi-genre or multi-discourse texts in which the writers use not only their own knowledge but also knowledge from others, knowledge

from different discourses. It is interesting to study how students develop or struggle in their writing when asked to use visual graphics. It is interesting to study the differences between students writing on a topic from their own perspectives and students writing on the same topic after reading some secondary sources; it is interesting to study what happens to the latter group in terms of word choice, word frequency, or change in perspectives. Finally, it is interesting to study the writing in e-mail exchanges. These are just a few examples of doing postmodern research.

## Linguistics

The area of Linguistics, especially in the field of foreign language teaching, used to be largely devoted to teaching sentential structures. In transformational or generative linguistics, developed by Noam Chomsky during the 1950s, students learn how sentential constituents are constructed, mostly using tree diagrams (Akmajian; et al. 2001) In this structural approach, less attention is given to meaning than to grammaticality. And if meaning is considered, it is mostly within the sentence, not in the discourse. In other words, transformational linguists do not study language at the discourse level. Until not long ago, theorists such as Haig Bosmajian, Lester Faigley, Mark Turner, and George Lakoff, whose works were done in more recent years, showed that language studies now pay more attention to how language is really used among humans. Hawkins (2001) captures this social trend best: "Linguists have grown accustomed to seeing language as an organisational system which mediates the interactions of human beings with the world around them."

Linguists of recent years have become interested in the term "ideology" and power that resides in ideology. The term "ideology" is not definite in meaning. In *Ideology: An Introduction*, Eagleton (1991: 1-2) gives many meanings of ideology, such as "the process of production of meanings, signs, values, in social life," "ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power," "false ideas which help to legitimate a dominant political power," "systemically distorted communication," "forms of thought motivated by social interests," and "action-oriented sets of

beliefs.” From these definitions, we can understand that ideology fuels opinions, needs, desires, and actions. As a result, we can study ideology and power in language, and ideology in administrators’ correspondences, for example. In Thailand, EFL writing teachers may study the ideologies of Thai students who are culturally subservient and not politically active.

Most language studies now seem to involve studying ideology and power, for language is believed to be a medium of ideological exchange. We know that the use of one word may change the whole situation; it may suddenly solve a conflict or make it worse. The word “parasite,” for example, can affect a whole tribe of people. In the 1920s, Adolf Hitler used such power words as “Jewish bastardization,” “blood poisoning,” “racial disintegration,” “contamination of our people,” and “black parasites” (Bosmajian. 1983) to arouse crowd mentality among radical Germans, resulting in great hatred for Jews and finally a massacre of them.

Language cannot be separated from society, and one can study effects of language in a large scale-language of this group, language of that group, language of the oppressed, language of the winners, and so on. However, it is more practical to focus on a smaller point. For example, one can explore the word “metaphor.” In a small research project, one can study the effect of using metaphors in students’ writing. There is much to learn from metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 4) point out that for a very big part we conceive of things in metaphorical concepts. Therefore, teaching EFL students to learn metaphorical concepts can be one good way for empowering their English ability. For example, the concept ARGUMENT IS WAR leads to sentences like “Your claims are defensible,” “I have never won an argument with him,” and “He attacked every weak point in my argument.” EFL students should be able to increase their language power through learning metaphorical concepts. From the concept ARGUMENT IS WAR, we can make many more metaphorical sentences than those that Lakoff and Johnson give, such as “He killed me with that claim” and “In that meeting I died because of his question.”

There are uncountable topics to select to study language. For instance, Brown and Gilman (cited in Fowler, 1985) dig deep into how in semantic and ideological terms the choices of pronouns demonstrate relationships between speakers and listeners. Some pronouns show respect of children for parents. With regard to power, social principles may classify pronouns into “superior,” “inferior,” and “equal.” Similarly, Faigley (1992) explains how, in a university director’s memo and a school headmaster’s letter, using “we” instead of “I” may help the writer avoid resistance of the reader and convey institutional power, and how agentless structures may make commands sound more polite. Using vague pronouns such as “something” and “somebody” can make an intentional ellipsis of information which may cause anger or doubt. In addition, such features as letterheads and reference numbers make letters more formal and more credible. In short, Faigley studies rhetorical situations of language use. Next, in **The Power of Grammar: Unconventional Approaches to the Conventions of Language**, Ehrenworth and Vinton (2005: 64–68) explain how grammar knowledge helps to empower writing. For instance, paragraphing can introduce and emphasize new ideas and hold an emotion in one place; fragments can “create a more rapid pace [of reading] and imply the fragmented observation and knowledge [of something]” ; shifting tense can change the mood and “evoke a sudden shift in perspective or voice, from one that is contemplative or distance to one that is more animated, sometimes more dangerous or provocative.”

Language theorists now pay attention to social effects of language. The teaching of EFL should not be geared toward correctness only; otherwise, students will be treated as objects of evaluation. While teaching grammatical structures, the teacher should teach what effect each structure makes. For instance, a short phrase at the end of a sentence gives a nice rhythm and time for the reader to process information, as in “There is only one person in this world that I love most, my mother.” Teaching should not cause stiffness in students’ language. Feeling stiff, students may not write something such as “I love when the leaves are falling and I can hear them crunch under my feet as I walk to class” and “His slamming the door on the day created a big

wound in me until this day.” Feeling stiff, students may be oblivious and may not consider that “a problem child” and “a child with a problem” do not mean the same.

The branch of linguistics in which the language theorists mentioned above (Faigley; Lakoff; & Bosmajian, etc.) may be classified into is called cognitive linguistics. This branch of linguistics basically teaches the learner to pay attention to the effects of language when used with a person or a group of persons. In other words, it teaches the learner to utilize his or her cognitive ability. When one hears the word “parasite,” one associates it with other things. One may think of a man acting like a parasite or a pimp, or a person taking advantage of others, or someone in an organization that receives benefits without contributing enough work. Much of cognitive linguistics is about using language intelligently in order that the language user achieves the purpose. One must learn when to use a word, and when not. In short, cognitive linguistics teaches us to read the mind of the significant other. Its teaching is very detailed; sometimes it goes deep down to teaching one to specify where on an imaginative line the power of the writer is as opposed that of the reader. This branch of study, therefore, supports creative and imaginative use of language. Thus, sometimes one says, “Death sits beside me and shakes me up from the dream.”

Cognitive linguistics, therefore, may be said to have adopted the mode of the modern subject because it encourages the use of cognitive and transcendental ability to decipher the surrounding. What about the postmodern subject? Currently, there is a newer branch of linguistics called critical linguistics. In this branch, the learner learns to criticize language used in different discourses, thus learning language as well as knowledge at the same time. Critical linguists identify with the idea that learning is socially constructed. In the world of postmodernism, critical linguists study language in the media and communicative technology. For example, Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999: 10-13) demonstrate how in this age of capitalism, the production of texts is diversified through technological advancements. Most texts now are not produced following established genres. Instead, most texts become hybrid, become places of different discourses functioning differently. Texts of this age are carefully designed to sell, normally with use of signs

and images. The content may belong to a discourse of charitable appeals or to a discourse of politics, or to other discourses. The function of a discourse in the text, such as a political discourse, may be to normalize or homogenize people. All sentences have certain functions. The heading of an advertisement called **The Big Issue Christmas Appeal** has the power to draw the reader's attention through two syntactically parallel phrases (Homeless this Christmas. But not for life.) The second phrase is shortened for "But not homeless for life."

Thus, in the age, one can do research on how language of one discourse are integrated with languages of other discourses. This can be a big research project. In a classroom, the teacher can study how his or her students understand the language (both visual and verbal) of the media. Or the teacher can have the students create a multi-genre text with images and explain the use of the images and genres. In ethnographic research, graduates may be assigned to study the postmodern culture of a language. I want to end this section with questions about the shift to communicative approach. Generative grammar is attacked elsewhere, especially in English-speaking countries where there is sufficient access of the language. What is the consequence of deemphasizing grammar in our society, where there is not enough availability of the language? Many students come to university unable to form even simple sentences. Therefore, what if we do not leave grammar but integrate it with the concept of socialism? What if in high schools teachers still teach a large amount of grammar and have students write and read different texts to a considerable extent? Discussions can be about students' grammar development, communicative skills, and worldly knowledge.

## **Literature**

In the field of Literature, socialism may be investigated from many directions. For right now, let's examine it from some major theories. The move from structuralism to poststructuralism or deconstruction reflects socialism. Theorists of structuralism "believe that codes, signs, and rules



govern all human social and cultural practices, including communication. Whether that communication is the language of fashion, sports, education, friendships, or literature, each is a systematized combination of codes (signs) governed by rules” (Bressler. 2003) Thus, the study of a literary text from the point of view of structuralism is the study of the rules that govern the production of the text. If it is the study of the culture in which a text is produced, it is the study of the rules inside the culture that govern the production of the text, not the rules outside that culture. Usually, when structuralism is applied, there is usually an indication of time and place when a text is studied a text of British literature before 1800s, for example. Theorists of structuralism also believe that by recognizing the rules, the author can accurately control the production of a text, thus treating the author as a coherent self.

On the other hand, theorists of poststructuralism believe that texts are unstable. Poststructuralism has several versions deconstruction, post-Marxism, and postmodernism, etc. (Carey-Webb. 2001). The terms poststructuralism, postmodernism, and deconstruction are often used synonymously (Bressler. 2003). This is, I can see, because all these share one main concept--that learning is social. Poststructuralism asserts that “language is always a social phenomenon, created by an interactive community of speakers. Thus no one has an isolated, complete, or “unified” consciousness separate from the language and culture in which we all live. Individuals are cultural beings, and language, texts, institutions, and social practices script the way we think and act” (Carey-Webb. 2001: 134-35). Poststructuralists or postmodernists do not believe that there is such a thing as “objective reality” or objective knowledge knowable and discoverable by any intelligent person who wishes to do so. Instead, “all definitions and depictions of truth are subjective, simply creations of [different] human minds. Truth itself is relative, depending on the nature and variety of cultural and social influences in one’s life” (Bressler. 2003: 98).

Deconstruction is a concept founded by Jacques Derrida. Deconstructionists reject the traditional assumption that language can accurately represent reality and propose that language is a fundamentally unstable medium. The deconstructionist approach attempts to show how texts

“deconstruct,” that is, how they can be broken down “into mutually irreconcilable positions” (Gioia & Kennedy. 1999: 1408-9). Deconstructionists like Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault also reject the notion that there is absolute authorial control over language and call for “the death of the author,” supporting the assumption that “the author, no matter how ingenious, cannot fully control the meaning of a text.” Deconstruction clings to the maxim of undecidability; deconstructionists believe that “a text has many meanings, and, therefore, no definitive interpretation” (Bressler. 2003 : 95). Biesta (1995), based on the work of Foucault, points out that the subject always places herself in intersubjectivity, in a language created by others.

Unlike Composition and Linguistics, the study of Literature is more about lives and cultures than language and the production of a text. Research in literature, therefore, is often about the understanding of the culture of a society, the history of the culture, the changes that happen when two or more cultures clash, features that are present or absent in a text, and so on. Roberts (2005: 19) suggests some ways for studying a literary work: (1) the work’s characters; (2) its historical period and background; (3) the social and economic conditions it depicts; (4) its major ideas; or (5) any of its artistic qualities. Those who have studied literature for a good amount know that we look at these things inside a literary work. But in the view of socialism, we often research a text by comparing it with another text to see, for example, the turbulences or clashes of an idea. A title of a research project in literature can be “A comparison of a in the b by c and the d by e.”

But in fact researchers can always combine Literature with the other subfields of English Studies. For example, Literature is more about creating subjectivity than is Composition, especially in Thailand, where writing is taught for the most part to improve language competence. EFL teachers can research into the use literary texts, e.g. fables, poems, plays, and ethnographies, in a writing class, the discussions of which may be about subjectivity, voice, agency, power, pride, language maturity, modern or postmodern subjects, etc.

## Pedagogy

Pedagogy is the fuel in the teaching and learning of anything. People often say pedagogy of this and pedagogy of that. In the field of Composition, there are process pedagogy and post-process pedagogy. In English Studies now, all pedagogies share the concept of socialism. A teacher who knows a concept that fuels pedagogy can use it to back up his or her research project. Professors and students in English Studies include pedagogical aspects in their research too. Let's study how the concept of socialism has come into Pedagogy.

Dewey (1938: 17, 30) divides education into two kinds: traditional and progressive. Traditional education emphasizes that individuals can develop themselves using reason. In this concept, "education is development from within." In the scheme of traditional education, knowledge is taught as a finished product and thus can be learned by rote and transferred by the teacher. Freire (2005) calls traditional education which imposes knowledge into the student "banking education."

Dewey offers another kind of education, "progressive education." In this concept, "education is development from without." That is, in progressive education society plays an important role in developing individuals. Education of this kind emphasizes the freedom of the learner, and learning by experience. Progressive education is education of, by, and for experience. Dewey sees education as accepting possibilities. "A new path might be better." Dewey's idea about accepting possibilities coincides with those of many recent theorists on education, especially those addressing postmodern education. Giroux (1992: 72) thinks that students should cross school borders to learn from other institutions or discourses; other institutions should play some role in education. Schools should not silence voices and teachers must be transformative intellectuals, working as helpers or partisans, for students to learn from new things, to see connections among bodies of knowledge. Giroux points out that knowledge is partial, multiple, indeterminate, and contradictory, and knowledge is constructed and translated within and between different communities.

Thus, collaborative learning is ideal and pursued in Pedagogy. Freire, in his renowned *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, clearly states the necessity of learning together: "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry

human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other.” Giroux (1988) suggests that pedagogies should encourage students of different class, gender, and ethnic locations to mediate and express their sense of place, time, and history, and their contradictory, uncertain, and incomplete interactions with each other and with the dynamics of schooling. Theorists on education, like theorists in the subfields of English Studies, see the subject not as autonomous or independent but social and dependent. Rorty (1998), identifying with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, insists that individuals are always transformed (and readily malformed) by culture and social hierarchies. In short, for these theorists, subjects cannot learn by themselves. In addition, they must be educated to be critical not only to get knowledge in competing discourses but also to get rid of the ills and injustice in the society. Many theorists use the word “critical” in the name of their pedagogies.

In providing education, why the modern subjectivity or the critical subjects are always pursued is because as society progresses it faces problems. As said above, modern discourses may allow some dominant groups to take advantage of or even to oppress others. Students, therefore, should learn to be critical. This is the emancipatory aspect included in all pedagogies. This aspect of teaching students to realize that some people ideologically take advantage of others and some are victims is evidenced in many discussions about power (Leahy. 2005), resistance (Marshall. 2001), democracy and voice (Haefner. 2003), struggle of the “Other” (Horner; & Lu. 2003), and freedom (Hinchey. 1998). That is, schooling should hope to create political subjects for fighting injustice.

Thus, in Pedagogy, while the modern subject, the subject with a critical and rational mind and transcendental ability, is pursued, the concept of socialism is highly valued. To conclude, we can see three important aims of education for the current age: to implant the critical mind in students, to help students learn from others (i.e. to empower them), and to maintain and develop the society. These objectives subsume other objectives, such as to get rid of oppression, to grapple with injustice and to listen to the voices of all groups. Educational researchers can use these pedagogical premises to support their research rationales.

## Conclusion

The concept of socialism, which revolves around discussions about the subject, seems to capture everything in English Studies. It seems also that this concept can be applied to any studies because from this term socialism one can think of many other terms, for example, individualism, hierarchy, justice, injustice, the self, subjectivity, the other, the oppressed, power, ideology, civilization, segregation, union, and so on. Even the well-known book *Madness and Civilization* by Foucault (1965) contains the concept of socialism. The book is about building governmental institutions for segregating humans; the crippled, the sick, and the mad must be confined, and treated as animals or objects. Definitely, Foucault sees civilization as fueled by rationality (or by the rational, modern subject), but in the book, it is the kind of civilization that suppresses powerless groups. Studying the term socialism, therefore, helps us understand the book better.

The term socialism allows one to think of the major subfields as interrelated. When one does research in English Studies, one should use knowledge from all subfields. Remember that, in postmodern view, there is no boundary as to the topics of research, as to how a researcher combines different bodies of knowledge together. EFL teachers may do research on democracy awareness or social responsibility in English classes, stepping the area of politics. The teacher of writing can exploit the concept of deconstruction. Deconstruction believes that a text gains its importance from its differences from other texts. So, a case study in a writing classroom can be that the teacher assigns her students to write about what is missing in some texts and to analyze or make connections between ideas that are missing from the texts and those that appear in other texts. The teacher can evaluate the students' interpretative skills and creative and analytical thinking in their writing.

In final words, the concept of socialism is clear in all major subfields of English Studies, and this concept certainly provides a good background for discussion and research for teachers and students in the EFL context.

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