

Thai Teachers' Opinions towards the Use of 'Open Cloze' Practices as Part of English Language Learning and Assessment Tool in an In-house ESL Training in a Bilingual School

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Abstract

As part of a professional development training program, this paper presents the results of a survey carried out to investigate the perception of Thai teachers towards the use of 'Open Cloze' practices in an in-house ESL training in a bilingual school context. After 'Open Cloze' practices had been used in the training for one month, the survey was conducted by means of questionnaires, the data from which was analyzed by both quantitative and qualitative methods. The respondents were 12 Thai teachers working at the school in the 2017 academic year. The study revealed that most respondents had positive attitudes towards the use of 'Open Cloze' practices in the in-house ESL training program. However, further study is needed for better understanding of the impact of the 'Open Cloze' practices in enhancing English language learning and improving the level of proficiency for Thai teachers in this particular bilingual school context.

Keywords: *ESL training, open cloze, cloze procedure, metacognition, active learning*

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In the teaching profession, it is quite right to say that teachers have to deal largely with communication - speaking, listening, reading, writing and presenting. They have to be able to communicate well in teaching students, collaborating with colleagues, and updating administrators and parents on the student learning progress, for example. This paper focuses on the improvement of English language skills of Thai teachers at a specific bilingual school which is widely recognized as one of the leading bilingual schools in Thailand. In the process of educating students at the school, both Thai and English languages are equally used. Hence, Thai and English speaking teachers as team members must maintain certain roles to complement each other in order to achieve their common goal of the 21st century teaching and learning. This requires Thai teachers to be skillful in communicating in English. However, the English proficiency for most Thai teachers was at the equivalent of A1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (CEFR); and this had hindered them from becoming effective co-teaching partners.

Recognizing this issue as a challenge in maintaining the academic standards at the school, school leaders and policy makers have encouraged and supported Thai teachers to strengthen their English language skills by providing their employees with an in-house English as a second language (ESL) training as part of their professional development. To assist these group of ESL learners to successfully undergo the process of second language acquisition, assessments on English language skills have been done regularly through the employment of competency-based and research-based assessment tools, i.e. Cambridge English Language Assessment and Common European Framework of Reference for language (CEFR).

The in-house ESL training program in this study was an integrated course for the development of all four language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing. English language was the main medium of instruction. Hence, listening skills had been invariably promoted. Technology-integrated recording materials were also used throughout the course. In encouraging speaking, learners were motivated to ask questions, make comments or discuss their viewpoints in every lesson. Reading was taught using short passages and stories of learners' interest. Generally, the learners were asked to answer after reading questions both in speaking and writing. Some writing techniques and grammar were usually explained during this time.

Of all the four skills, this study aimed particularly at reading since it has always been suggested by many scholars and linguists as the best way to learn a language and that it should be mastered if a second language is to be acquired. Professor Emeritus at the University of Southern California, Stephen Krashen states that "reading is good for you... Reading is the only way, the only way we become good readers, develop a good writing style, an adequate vocabulary, advanced grammar, and the only way we become good spellers" (Krashen, 1993). He has actively continued to promote reading for language acquisition onto the 21st century. On February 4, 2016, professor Krashen delivered a lecture in Toronto entitled, "Reading because you want to: The missing link in language education", indicating the principle that reading is essential for everyone (Krashen, 2016). By studying words presented in sentences or text passages, language learners are able to see how words are used while trying to improve their cognitive ability to deduce the meaning of a word by examining the words around it. In order to facilitate reading comprehension and improving the learners' overall English proficiency, 'Open Cloze' practices, as called by the Cambridge English Language Assessment, were also used in this in-house ESL training.

Prior to the use of the 'Open Cloze' practices in this in-house ESL program, gap-filling practices with word choices provided were used. Generally, ESL or EFL learners in Thailand are familiar with gap-filling tests or practices which word choices or word banks are provided. This can be normally seen in, for example, TOEIC, TOEFL and IELTS. "TOEIC measures the ability to answer multiple-choice questions after reading and listening to English...TOEFL has multiple-choice questions similar to TOEIC...IELTS, put out by Cambridge University in the United Kingdom is similar to TOEFL in scope and method (Kaufmann, 2002)." The 'Open Cloze' practices which word choices are not provided are not commonly practiced in English language teaching and learning in Thailand. The aim in using the 'Open Cloze' practices in this in-house ESL training is, thus, to encourage the learners to use their higher cognitive ability in searching for the missing elements of the texts, hence, improve their language proficiency.

1.2 Test Questions Types

Since the beginning of its introduction, 'Cloze test' has been used as a measurement of language proficiency. For better understanding of the term 'Open Cloze' and its characteristics, this section first examines test question types. According to the British Council (2005), there are four main types of test questions:

- 1) *A proficiency test* – This is a test type that measures a candidate's overall ability in a language; it is not related to a specific course. The examples of this test type are IELTS and TOEFL.
- 2) *An achievement test* – This test type is for testing students' knowledge of the material that has been taught on a course. Some examples of this test type are: a math exam covering information taught in class; the ACT and SAT exams; or skills demonstration in a dancing class.
- 3) *A diagnostic test* – This test type highlights the strong and weak points that a student may have in any particular area. A pre-test and post-test are generally designed for this purpose.
- 4) *A prognostic test* – Prognostic is fundamentally a medical term for predicting of the future course of development, outcome, or progress of a condition. However, it has also been used in language teaching and learning to predict how a student will perform on a course,

1.3 Types of test tasks

The British Council (2005) has listed commonly seen elicit action techniques or test tasks which are used by teachers in preparing for a test. Each task or technique may differ in its purpose. It is recommended that teachers are aware of their purposes before producing any tests. The following is the list of these test tasks:

- | | | |
|-------------------|------------------|--|
| - Multiple choice | - Matching | - True/false |
| - Dictation | - Gap-filling | - Error correction /error identification |
| - Cloze | - Open questions | - Ordering words/phrases |
| - Transformation | - Translation | - Sentence construction |
| - Essay writing | - etc. | |

This study reviewed specifically and extensively the 'Cloze' test task.

1.4 'Cloze' test and its history

There are a few terms for 'Cloze' tests in education, for example, 'Cloze Procedure', 'Open Cloze', 'Cloze deletion test', 'modified Cloze test', and 'Close strategy'. For people who are unfamiliar with them, these terms can be confusing. In principle, they are the same type of test task, but in different names. Scholars, linguists and teachers have sometimes referred to these terms interchangeably in reading comprehension tests. This study attempts to clarify these terms to prevent readers from confusion while reading the paper.

A 'Cloze' test is generally used as an exercise, a test or assessment in which a test taker is given a sentence or passage with certain words removed. The test taker is required to replace the missing elements to complete a sentence that is both grammatically and contextually correct.

According to Cambridge dictionary, a 'Cloze test' consists of a piece of text with words missing that a test taker has to fill in (Cambridge dictionaries online, 2018).

Cambridge English Language Assessment describes its 'Open Cloze' as "a test of structural control with many questions involving the completion of grammatical structures. It consists of a text in which there are gaps of missing elements. Candidates or test takers are required to draw on their knowledge of the structure of the language and understanding of the text in order to fill the gaps. Missing words can include articles, conjunctions and prepositions. Some questions may involve completing collocations and fixed phrases", (Cambridgeenglish.org, 2018).

The British Council (2005) defines 'Cloze' as a type of gap-fill where the gaps are regular, e.g. every 7th or 9th word. The technique can be used to assess students' reading comprehension or as a practice activity.

The 'Cloze Procedure' was developed by Wilson L. Taylor in 1953 based on the principle of *Gestalt* psychology theory of "closure" or the "*Principle of Closure*". *Gestalt* is a psychology term which means "unified whole". It refers to theories of visual perception developed by German psychologists in the 1920s (spokanefalls.edu, 2018). The theory refers to the tendency of the human mind to see complete figures or forms even if a picture is incomplete; partially hidden by other objects; or part of the information needed to make a complete picture in our minds is missing (Gestalt, n.d.)

According to Taylor (1953), the 'Cloze Procedure' involves taking a text and deleting parts of it in either a random or fixed pattern. For example, one can take a text of 500 words and randomly delete 10% of the words. Alternatively, one could delete every tenth word. In either case the deletions take place regardless of the importance of the word or its grammatical function. The readability of a text is assessed by the extent to which readers are able to provide the deleted words.

Taylor's method was more concerned with using the 'Cloze Procedure' to establish the readability factor. The idea is, the better readers understand a passage, the more successful they will be in filling in the blanks. For Taylor, correct guesses indicate understanding: cloze measures the "likeness between the language patterns used by the writer to express what he meant and those possibly different patterns which represent readers' guesses at what they think the writer meant (Taylor 1953)".

After conducting the research, Taylor concluded that 'Cloze' was a better and most valid predictor of reading difficulty than other empirical measurements (Patterson, 2016). The short paragraph below shows an example of a 'Cloze Procedure'.

"_____ mother is upset with _____ because I got caught _____ a rainstorm. Sadly, I _____ my umbrella at home. _____ clothes got soaked. I _____ I won't get sick (Kelly, 2017)."

Taylor also made an important addition to his findings that "[Cloze testing's] usefulness is by no means confined either to readability or to the reading ability of individuals... the cloze method appears to a very large number of potential research uses, both practical and theoretical (Taylor, 1953)". One of the practical uses identified by Taylor was the use of 'Cloze' testing in second language teaching and learning (Jenkins, 2017).

1.5 Different kinds of 'Cloze' tests

'Cloze' tests have been changing and developing. The types of 'Cloze' discussed in this paper are those strictly prepared by instructors or educators without choices provided for any texts. There are two main ways to create this type of 'Cloze' test (Jenkins, 2017).

1) Fixed-ratio 'Cloze' or Systematic deletion This is a method of test making in which every n^{th} word is removed from a text and replaced by a blank space. The sample paragraph below shows that every 5^{th} word has been removed:

Mary and John met _____ a restaurant before going _____ the movies. Mary ordered _____ ham sandwich, while John _____ a bowl of soup. _____ both had ice cream _____ dessert (Jenkins, 2017).

2) Rational deletion, Rational Cloze or Purposive Deletion Cloze The way to create a test from this method is to remove one or more specific words from the text and replace them with blank spaces with the purpose to target specific areas of linguistic as well as cultural knowledge. The sample sentence below shows two specific words have been removed:

I went shopping and bought a _____ of bread and a _____ of baked beans (Jenkins, 2017).

1.6 Cloze tests and its benefits in language learning

In order to keep up with the rapidly changing world, teaching and learning in the 21st century demands that teachers be involved in students' learning process by utilizing the most effective and innovative research based and best practices to promote teaching and learning. 'Cloze' practices for language learning can be very useful and valuable teaching tool in many areas of learning development. Listed below are some of the benefits from the use of 'Cloze' practices.

- *Promote learner's metacognition* – Metacognition is defined as “higher order thinking that enable understanding, analysis, and control of one's cognitive processes, especially when engaged in learning, (dictionary.com)”. According to Flavell (1976), a cognitive researcher and professor of psychology who introduced the term “metacognition”, it is defined as knowledge about cognition and control of cognition. The definition is made simpler to as the knowledge about cognition and monitoring of cognition. Metacognition is important in reading because it helps readers keep comprehension processing and realize what they can do (Channa & Nordin, 2014).

- *Encourage holistic learning* – 'Cloze' tests require test takers to examine language structures in a holistic manner rather than considering any single word in isolation. Comprehending text is a complex mental process. Learners need to use their prior knowledge to interpret the information in the text and construct a meaningful representation of what the text is. This is crucial to language learning (Ross, 2017), and it could ultimately enhance the process of learners' language acquisition.

- *Stimulate Active Learning* – Active learning involves providing opportunities for students to meaningfully talk and listen, write, read, and reflect on the contents, ideas, issues, and concerns of an academic subject (Meyers & Jones, 1993). 'Cloze' practices when used in the classroom engage learners to be participative and critically think and discuss with peers in a constructive manner to decode meaning in order to complete the task, thus, creating an active and productive learning atmosphere in the classroom.

- *Cultivate vocabulary* – According to Krashen (2004), vocabulary is best developed through real encounters with the words in context, over time, and in small doses. 'Cloze' tests promote active production of vocabulary, not just recognition. They can be used to bolster vocabulary usage and free recall, reinforce grammatical knowledge and structural recognition, and strengthen overall comprehension, (Ross, 2017). One particular study by Nation and Webb (2011) of twelve different exercises for vocabulary learning found that the use of 'Cloze' exercises was the second most effective way for students to retain vocabulary.

- *Indicator of overall language proficiency* – According to the British Council, an 'Open Cloze' which is similar to a gap-filling test is more integrative than the gap-filling as the test taker has to process the components of the language simultaneously. This type of test task has been proven to be good indicator of overall language proficiency (British Council, 2005).

1.7 Challenges and suggestions

Generally, 'Cloze' has been used as a teaching device to help improving students' reading skills. It has also been used to measure English language proficiency since it was introduced (Aitken, 1977; Brown, 1993; Caulfield & Smith, 1981; Chavanachat, 1986; Fotos, 1991; Oller & Conrad, 1971; Stubbs & Tucker, 1974; Hwang, 2007). However, there have been some efficacy issues regarding its use. Hadley

and Naaykens (1997) raised a question in their study whether ‘Cloze’ tests could measure more than just grammatical competence in second language learning.

In a more recent study (Fanguy et.al, 2004), the ‘Cloze Procedure’ was administered to native speakers of English language – customers of large American chain stores – to discover if the Cloze test provided a means to measure how “average” consumers actually understand key sections of written material. The four web-based Cloze Procedures were shown to the test takers. The results showed that only one out of four tests displayed a comprehension rate of more than 60%. This means that at least three out of four passages used were not easily understood by native speakers.

In July 2011, Bilki investigated the effectiveness of ‘Cloze’ tests in assessing the speaking and writing skills of Manisa Celal Bayar University Preparatory School students. The study addressed the issue whether ‘Cloze’ tests were adequate tools in measuring the productive skills, writing and speaking, of L2 learners. The results pointed out a possible use of ‘Cloze’ tests in testing speaking and writing with a strong correlation found between speaking and writing and ‘Cloze’ test (Bilki, 2011).

Despite the fact that ‘Cloze Procedure’ has prompted much discussion and criticism regarding its reliability, validity and efficacy, there is ample evidence that it does measure reading comprehension and higher order processing (Patterson, 2016). The British Council suggests that teachers be cautious of multiple correct answers and that students may need some practice before pursuing it for their language evaluation (British Council, 2005).

This study aims to investigate the perception of Thai teachers towards the use of ‘Open Cloze’ practices in an in-house ESL training program to find out how these practices helped them improve their language proficiency level. It examines and analyzes the data through descriptive statistics for the quantitative data collected. It also employs qualitative method by listing the comments provided by the respondents. It, then, reveals the results of the survey and presents the conclusion regarding the use of the ‘Open Cloze’ in an in-house ESL training and, finally, provides some recommendations for further study

2. Objectives

This study consists of two main objectives:

1. To obtain the information and opinions from the Thai teachers towards the use of ‘Open Cloze’ practices as part of language learning and assessment in an in-house ESL training program
2. To gauge the opinions and feedback on the use of ‘Open Cloze’ practices in helping the Thai teachers improve their English language proficiency level

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Subjects

The study was conducted with the total of 12 respondents of Thai nationality working in the 2017 academic year at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University. No special criteria were used in selecting or excluding the subjects. There was no pre-test or post-test given to this group of subjects.

3.2 Data collection and Instruments

A questionnaire was used as a research instrument in this study. It was completed by the respondents and collected by the researchers on the same day. There were two parts to the questionnaires. The first part (Part 1) covered general information of the respondent in seven main points: age, gender, the highest education, teaching experience, level(s) of teaching at present, years of English language learning, and in-house ESL training experience prior to the current one. The second part (Part 2) comprised of two sections. In Part 2A: Statements of Opinion, there were a total of 18 questions in five categories: *Learning and Assessment tool, Content, Skills, Training, and Classroom Management*. The information was measured by the Five-Point Likert weighted scale.

Part 2B, Opinions and Suggestions, was a section where additional opinions and suggestions of the respondents were presented in writing.

3.3 Procedures

Descriptive statistical procedures used in analyzing the data collected were as follows:

- 1) Frequency and percentage in describing the general information of the subjects in Part 1.

2) Frequency, arithmetic mean and standard deviation in analyzing the data obtained from the statements of opinion in Part 2A of the questionnaire.

3) A qualitative method in describing additional opinions and suggestions presented by each respondent in Part 2B.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

Twelve copies of the questionnaires were completed and collected from the respondents on the same day. Part 1 of the questionnaire was analyzed using frequency and percentage to describe the general information of the subjects as shown below:

Table 1 Gender of Thai teachers

Gender	N	Percentage (%)
Male	-	0.00 %
Female	12	100 %
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

According to Table 1, all of the twelve respondents or 100% were females.

Table 2 Age of Thai teachers

Age	N	Percentage (%)
26-30	2	16.7 %
31-35	3	25.0 %
36-40	1	8.3 %
41-45	5	41.7 %
46-50	-	0.00%
50 up	1	8.3 %
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents or 41.7% were between forty one to forty five years old. The second group or 25% were between thirty one to thirty five years old. The third group or 16.7% were between twenty six to thirty years old. There was one teacher or 8.3% from each of these two age groups, between thirty six to forty and fifty years up.

Table 3 Highest degree held by Thai teacher

Highest Degree	N	Percentage (%)
Bachelor's	8	66.7 %
Master's	4	33.3 %
Others	-	0.00 %
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

According to Table 3, there were four teachers or 33.3% who held a Master's degree, the remaining eight people or 66.7% held a Bachelor's degree.

Table 4 Teaching experience

Teaching Experience	N	Percentage (%)
1-3 years	3	25.0 %
4-6 years	-	0.00%
7-9 years	3	25.0%
Over 9 years	6	50.0%
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

Table 4 shows that there were three teachers or 25% each with 1-3 years and 7-9 years teaching experience. The remaining six teachers or 50% had over 9 years of teaching experience.

Table 5 Level(s) of teaching at present

Level(s) of Teaching	N	Percentage (%)
Kindergarten (K1-3)	11	91.7%
Primary (P1-6)	1	8.3 %
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

Table 5 shows that eleven teachers or 91.7% taught at the Kindergarten. Only one teacher or 8.3% taught at the Primary School.

Table 6 Year(s) of English language learning

Year(s) of English Learning	N	Percentage (%)
4-6 years	2	16.7%
7-9 years	-	0.00%
9-12 years	4	33.3%
Over 12 years	6	50.0%
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

According to Table 6, there were two teachers or 16.7% who had 4-6 years, four teachers or 33.3% had 9-12 years, and six teachers or 50.0% with over 12 years of English language learning experience respectively.

Table 7 In-house ESL training experience prior to the current one

In-house ESL Experience	N	Percentage (%)
Yes	-	0.00%
No	12	100%
Total	12	100 %

N= number of Thai teachers

Table 7 illustrates that all the teachers or 100% did not have prior in-house ESL training experience prior to the current one.

In obtaining the opinions towards the use of 'Open Cloze' practices, the questionnaire in Part 2A was designed by putting types of opinions into five categories: *Learning and Assessment tool, Content, Skills, Training, and Classroom Management*. A Five-Point Likert weighted scale (Kumar, 1999) was used to rank the degree of opinions. The mean scores were categorized into five groups as follows:

<i>Opinion</i>	<i>Mean range</i>
Strongly agree	4.21 – 5.00
Agree	3.41 – 4.20
Undecided	2.61 – 3.40
Disagree	1.81 – 2.60
Strongly disagree	1.00 – 1.80

The results of the study in Part2A are as follow.

Table 8 Opinions of Thai teachers with reference to learning and assessment tool

Opinions	Thai Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Likert Scale
I - Learning and Assessment tool			
1. 'Open Cloze' assessment is an interesting approach to help me understand English better.	3.667	0.778	Agree
2. 'Open Cloze' practices are difficult for me and will not help me understand English any better.	1.750	1.138	Strongly disagree
3. Using 'Open Cloze' assessment for English language learning is appropriate for the in-house ESL training.	3.833	0.717	Agree
4. Using 'Open Cloze' assessment helps me improve my understanding and use of English language structure.	3.583	0.793	Agree

Under the category of *Learning and Assessment tool*, the study shows that most Thai teachers had a positive attitude towards the use of the 'Open Cloze' practices as a learning and assessment tool for their English language learning. They agreed that it was an interesting approach (Mean=3.667, SD=0.778). They strongly disagreed that 'Open Cloze' practices were difficult (Mean=1.750, SD=1.138). They agreed that the use of 'Open Cloze' assessment was appropriate (Mean=3.833, SD=0.717). They also agreed that it could help improving their understanding and use of English structure (Mean=3.583, SD=0.793).

Table 9 Opinions of Thai teachers with reference to the content of 'Open Cloze' practices

Opinions	Thai Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Likert Scale
II - Content			
5. The difficulty of the passages of the 'Open Cloze' practices is appropriate for the in-house ESL training for Thai teachers.	3.750	0.866	Agree
6. The length of the passages of the 'Open Cloze' practices is appropriate for the in-house ESL training for Thai teachers	3.750	0.866	Agree
7. The topics and contents of the 'Open Cloze' practices are suitable for language learning.	4.000	0.000	Agree
8. 'Open Cloze' practices have expanded my vocabulary in a variety of topics.	4.417	0.515	Strongly agree

In the second category of *Content*, the results show that Thai English teachers viewed this aspect positively, which suggested that, for them, there were no problems regarding the materials used in the in-house ESL training. On the question of passage difficulty and length of the passage, they agreed that they were appropriate with equal Mean and SD on both questions (Mean=3.750, SD=0.866). They agreed that the contents of the practices were suitable (Mean=4.000, SD=0.000). They strongly agreed that their vocabulary was expanded using the 'Open Cloze' exercises (Mean=4.417, SD=0.515).

Table 10. Opinions of Thai Teachers with Reference to Skill building

Opinions	Thai Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Likert Scale
III – Skills			
9. My reading skills have improved after the introduction of ‘Open Cloze’ practices in the training program.	3.917	0.288	Agree
10. My analytical and reasoning skills have improved using ‘Open Cloze’ practices in the training program.	3.917	0.288	Agree
11. ‘Open Cloze’ practices have given me more confidence to analyze and select the appropriate vocabulary to answer the questions.	3.667	0.492	Agree
12. ‘Open Cloze’ practices have given me more confidence to self-correct my use of the English language.	3.667	0.651	Agree
13. Using ‘Open Cloze’ practices has helped me improve my English in Language skills: Reading & Writing	3.833	0.389	Agree
14. Using ‘Open Cloze’ practices has helped me improve my English in Communication skills: Listening & Speaking	3.583	0.668	Agree

The opinions of the Thai teachers in the category of *Skills* were similar to the first two categories. In item 9, most Thai teachers agreed with the statement that their reading skills had improved after the introduction of ‘Open Cloze’ practices in the training program (Mean= 3.917, SD= 0.288). In item 10, Thai teachers agreed that their analytical and reasoning skills had improved (Mean= 3.917, SD= 0.288). Item 11 shows that a majority of Thai teachers agreed that the practices had given them more confidence to analyze and select the appropriate vocabulary to answer the questions (Mean= 3.667, SD= 0.492). Item 12 shows similar result as item 11 that they were more confident to self-correct their use of English language (Mean= 3.667, SD= 0.651).

In item 13, the Thai teachers agreed that ‘Open Cloze’ practices had helped them improve their English in the category of Language skills: Reading & Writing (Mean= 3.833, SD= 0.389). They also agreed with the statement in item 14 on Communication skills: Listening & Speaking (Mean= 3.583, SD= 0.668).

On average, the Thai teachers agreed that they were more confident and motivated in using English language in the classrooms, and that the ‘Open Cloze’ exercises had promoted their metacognition. In addition, they agreed that their four language skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking, had improved through the practice of the ‘Open Cloze’.

Table 11 Opinions of Thai teachers with reference to training

Opinions	Thai Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Likert Scale
IV – Training			
15. The teacher was prepared and organized for the training of ‘Open Cloze’ practices in each lesson.	4.083	0.288	Agree
16. The teacher was able to explain clearly when I asked her questions about English language regarding to the ‘Open Cloze’ practices.	4.167	0.389	Agree

In terms of *Training* which was the fourth category, the study shows that most Thai teachers were satisfied with the ESL teacher's preparation and performance in this ESL training with the Mean and SD of 4.083, 0.288 and 4.167, 0.389 respectively.

Table 12 Opinions of Thai teachers with reference to classroom management

Opinions	Thai Teachers		
	Mean	SD	Likert Scale
V – Classroom management			
17. The training room is suitable for me.	4.417	0.515	Strongly Agree
18. The training time is suitable for me.	4.250	0.452	Strongly Agree

In the final category of this study, *Classroom Management*, the study revealed that the majority of Thai teachers agreed that the training time and the locations were suitable with the Mean and SD of 4.417, 0.515 and 4.250, 0.452 respectively.

Part 2B of the questionnaire was an open-ended section for additional opinions and suggestions. Out of twelve respondents, four Thai teachers (33.33%) gave their viewpoints and suggestions for the in-house ESL training program. Two teachers (16.66%) commented that they would like to do more on speaking skills. The other two presented their views on overall language learning that they enjoyed the program and wanted to learn more English language.

To summarize, the results from this study show Thai teachers mostly agreed that the use of 'Open Cloze' practices helped them improve their language proficiency according to their responses in the first three categories: Learning and Assessment tool, Content, and Skills. Most Thai teachers held similar views that the use of 'Open Cloze' practices was an interesting and appropriate approach to be used in the in-house ESL training to help them understand English better. The contents, including topics, length and difficulty of the 'Open Cloze' practices were perceived to be appropriate to the teachers. They agreed that these practices had expanded their vocabulary. The responses to the remaining two categories, Training and Classroom Management, were also positive.

4.2 Discussion

According to the general information, with reference to age, half of the total number of the respondents was over 40 years old. In addition, they were all female. This raises a question whether the issue of gender may, to some extent, lie behind their similar opinions when answering the questionnaire.

In viewing their educational background, the majority of the respondents, or 66.7%, held a Bachelor's degree. The remaining, or 33.3%, held a Master's degree. As their degrees were all in Education, this might have some influence on their positive attitudes towards any training programs for professional development. Another important data was that most of the respondents, or 91.7%, had taught Kindergarten 1-3, and one, or 8.3%, had taught Primary 1-6. This information leads to a question whether their experience in teaching mainly young learners could impact their tendency to respond to the questionnaire in similar direction.

The final discussion focuses on their English language learning experience. The data show that only two of the respondents, or 16.7%, had less than nine years of English language learning, the remaining 83.3% had over nine years. With this length of time, it can be assumed that they were familiar with the language, and that it could have some influence on their positive views and motivation in improving their current English language skills.

5. Conclusion

This study has revealed the opinions of Thai teachers towards the use of 'Open Cloze' practices as part of language learning and assessment in an in-house ESL training program at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University in 2017 academic year. The findings indicate that overall opinions of the Thai teachers were quite similar in all categories. The study clearly shows that the use of 'Open Cloze' practices was well received and accepted by the Thai teachers as an appropriate and beneficial approach to be used in the

ESL training program at this particular bilingual school. The findings could also be used to support the decision making of school's leaders and policy makers in promoting professional development to the employees at the school.

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made for further study:

1) Further research should be conducted with the subjects who are involved in English language learning for the improvement of communicating and collaborative teaching with English speaking teachers in the 2018 academic year at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University. The study should also cover subjects from all teaching levels, i.e., Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary. Adequate number of participants could minimize the likelihood of errors to and improve the understanding of the phenomenon of the study.

2) Further research should be done on a larger scale to investigate and determine the level of improvement of English language proficiency of Thai teachers at Satit Bilingual School of Rangsit University resulting from the use of the 'Open Cloze' practices, and how this improvement impacts them on collaborative teaching and communication with English speaking teachers.

3) Further research should be conducted and investigated in depth in the aspects of effectiveness and success of the use of 'Open Cloze' practices as a tool for language learning and assessment in enhancing the level of English language proficiency for ESL learners in this particular bilingual school context.

4) Further research should be done on a larger scale to include many bilingual schools in Thailand which employ the use of 'Open Cloze' practices in their in-house ESL training as part of professional development to find out if it is applicable and benefits these schools and their employees in language learning improvement and acquisition.

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