Primary School English Teachers' Application of Knowledge/Skills from Boot Camp to Their Classroom Teaching Practices and Factors Hindering Their Application

Netchanok Sunyakul
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand
Netchanok_sunyakul@hotmail.com

Adisa Teo
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand
adisa.s@psu.ac.th

Abstract

The Ministry of Education has organized the teacher training—Boot Camp—to improve teachers' English proficiency and teaching methodology. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the extent of primary school English teachers' application of knowledge/skills obtained from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices and factors that hinder them from such application. Participants of this study were 100 primary school English teachers who attended Boot Camp, Batch 1-19, at Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University Center. A mixed method approach, combining a questionnaire and interviews, was used to gather the quantitative and qualitative data. The results showed that the teachers often applied the obtained knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom and factors that hindered them from such application are related to teachers, students, and school context. The results of this study provide implications for the design of the teacher training which promotes effective application of the knowledge/skills from the training.

Keywords: primary school English teachers, Boot Camp, teacher training, classroom teaching practices

Introduction

English has been the language for international communication and has played a significant role in the areas of business, technology, industry, international traveling, entertainment, and almost every aspect related to our daily lives (Alptekin, 2002). Therefore, the Thai government has attempted to improve English education by enhancing students' English proficiency, especially in communicative skills. However, Dr. Teerakiat Jareonsettasin, Deputy Minister of Education, asserted *"many Thai teachers and students are good at grammar but they can't use English in real life situations, so we need to train them on how to use functional English."*

In order to provide teachers with professional development, the Thai Ministry of Education (MoE) in collaboration with British Council organized a professional development program —Boot Camp— that focuses on improving English teachers' proficiency in the language and their teaching methods in a communicative approach (Rohitsatien, 2016). The British Council's professional development framework for teacher education is a guide to promote all of those involved in the education and training of teachers. Professional development aims to enhance a positive effect on developing teachers' knowledge and skills (British Council, 2015). To be effective, professional development requires considerate planning followed by efficient implementation with feedback to ensure it responds to participants' needs. In addition, the participating teachers can benefit most by learning in the

setting where they can immediately apply what they learnt to their classroom (Lie- Berman & Miller, 1984).

Training as a model of professional development is the most effective for the acquisition of the new knowledge and skills (Collins, 2000). Effective teacher training depends on how well participating teachers comprehend, plan, and apply the obtained knowledge to their classroom. In addition, training sessions must be extended, supplemented, or evaluated with additional post-training follow-up activities to provide the feedback and coaching necessary for the successful application of knowledge from a teacher training. Such process will support teachers to make changes in their classroom teaching practices (Guskey, 2002).

Now that Boot Camp as a teacher training program has been run for two years, this study seeks to find out the extent of primary school English teachers' application of knowledge/skills obtained from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices. It also aims to examine factors (if any) that hinder them from such application. It is hoped that the findings concerning post-training self-evaluation would provide practical suggestions for effective designs of teacher training programs.

Literature Review

Numerous empirical studies on professional development has proved that it was necessary to develop quality of work and outcomes at every organization or company through professional development which, in the broad meaning, refers to an on-going process which enhances participants' professional experiences, attitudes, knowledge and skills. When individuals participate in professional development, they will acquire new knowledge/skills and apply them to develop their professional role (Borko, 2004; Villegas, 2003). In education, professional development is defined as "the professional process in which a teacher achieves more experience and analyzes their teaching methodically"(Glatthorn, 1995, p.41). Professional development is crucial for English teachers to renew their teaching practices with the modernizations in their profession. It can improve their teaching competency, enhance their knowledge/skills and, in turn, boost their students' achievement. (Hattie, 2009)

According to Drago-Severson (1994), Guskey (2000), Joyce and Showers (1982), and Sparks (1989), there are five models of professional development as follows: training, involvement in a development/improvement process, observation/assessment, individually-guided development, and inquiry. Collins (2000) investigated the effectiveness of the above-mentioned models and found that teacher training with follow-up activity is the most effective in supporting teachers to acquire new knowledge, particularly in applying it. Furthermore, training is the professional development model that most teachers are familiar with and the most widely used because of its highest level of effectiveness.

Teacher training can be described as a process of assisting teachers to obtain the new knowledge which brings about more effective classroom teaching practices (Farrell, 2008). It is generally conducted in the forms of workshop, seminar, or conference with determined sets of goals and participants' outcomes. The presenters or trainers are the ones who generate content and run the activities throughout the training. Typically training consists of theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and coaching. Effective teacher trainings normally include follow-up process in which participants can evaluate themselves on application of new knowledge they acquired. Such process will therefore develop teachers' attitude, knowledge, and teaching skills professionally (Joyce & Showers, 1982; Campbell et al., 1975).

Typically, the teacher training content is designed by program trainers. The content is mostly related to participants' needs (Freeman & Johnson, 1998). When the content is well-planned, it will be transmitted in the name of training process which comprises activities,

techniques and experiences to pass on the new knowledge and skills to the participants in training. A significant process in teacher training is a feedback session which reflects a progress of learning throughout the training. For example, the micro-teaching sessions give participating teachers opportunities to practice their teaching by applying the knowledge and skills they acquired in the teacher training. Meanwhile, participants can learn by observing their peers' teaching performance that can help them become more competent in their teaching. (Britten, 1985; Ferguson & Donno, 2003)

In Thailand, the MoE launched a teacher training program organized by British Council since they realized most Thai students cannot speak English and they have little opportunity to practice speaking English. As a result, Boot Camp, a teacher training program aiming to improve teachers' proficiency in the language and their teaching methods in a communicative approach was organized. Activities in Boot Camp consisted of workshops or short courses which focus on improving teaching methodology and English proficiency. The contents of this training focused on communicative activities with a learner-centered approach. Each participating teacher attended a three-week, 90-hour course which covered lesson planning, lesson management, learner-centered activities, speaking activities, teaching vocabulary, teaching reading, teaching grammar, and so on. Especially, the activities in each week involved teachers' planning, delivering microteaching lessons to their peers. These activities of Boot Camp were organized during three weeks as follows. In the first week, the training content focused on teaching vocabulary and reading. The purpose was to develop the participants' vocabulary learning, vocabulary teaching techniques and reading teaching techniques. For the second week, the content covered teaching speaking and grammar as well as the issues related to accuracy and fluency in speaking practice through interaction. The aim was to develop the participants' oral communication skills. During the third week, the content emphasized teaching listening and writing. The participants were trained in listening skill through practice in planning an effective listening skill approach. For teaching writing, a process-writing framework was used for developing writing skill. English was used as a medium of instruction throughout the training program and the participants were encouraged to use English all the time. With the exposure to English and the opportunities to communicate in the language during the training, the participants' English proficiency was developed. Post-training follow-up activities were also planned for each batch of Boot Camp (except batch 20) to evaluate the success and how well the participating teachers applied the knowledge/skills from the training to their classroom. This final session of Boot Camp provided a bridge to teacher's own classroom teaching practices and learners through reflection and discussion a few months after they attended the training. (British Council, 2016)

To be most effective, teacher training should include theory, demonstration, practice, feedback, and classroom application. According to Guskey (2000), the evaluation of classroom teaching practices is the key to indicate the degree and quality of implementation of the knowledge from teacher training. The information from this assessment can be gathered after the training has completed. Based on a study of Nunan (2003), although there are many strategies of post-training evaluations, teachers' self-evaluation is the most feasible form of post-training evaluations with the easiest type of information to gather and analyze. Teacher self-evaluation can be assessed in a short period of time. This evaluation can be assessed from teachers' own perspective; it is seen as an internal or self-directed process. Questionnaires, rating scales and check-lists are useful applications of self-evaluation materials and procedures. The teachers are to indicate the degree they find appropriate according to their own estimated teaching practices after one month or one semester of teaching.

Klimenko (2015) and Gortan (2016) conducted studies on the frequency of application of the knowledge and teaching strategies from the training program. Self-assessment questionnaires were used in these studies. The findings revealed that most of the primary school teachers still adopted the traditional teaching strategies and teacher-centered strategies although they were exposed to modern teaching strategies. Most of the studies on the application of the obtained knowledge from teacher training were intensively conducted in Europe. While research on factors that hinder such application in primary school in Thailand is rare, such findings of studies in European contexts cannot be generalized to primary school English teachers in Thailand since the characteristics of teachers may diverge across different regions. In Thailand, although the studies on teacher training have addressed teacher training evaluation, the majority of them mostly related to teachers' satisfaction towards the training (Piamsai, 2017; Supising et al., 2018; Thongsri, 2016). Therefore, it is highly desirable to specifically explore the application of the knowledge from teacher training and the factors that hinder such application of primary school English teachers in Thailand.

Most of the studies on teacher training assessment in Thailand focus only on application of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) teachers learnt from training. For example, Manajitt (2008), Manumit (2008) and Promtara (2018) studied teacher assessment on the degree and quality of applications of CLT in their class. The participants were 58, 32, and 20 primary school teachers, respectively. The results indicated most of the teachers supported the CLT principles that they learnt from the previous training and usually applied it to their class. However, these studies included a small number of participants in one area which represented only a small scale of primary school English teachers in Thailand. It could not be claimed that findings based on a small number of participants in one research area would be representative of those in other parts of Thailand.

Furthermore, studies on post-training self-evaluation were conducted in Thai context (Duerama, 2012). The studies aimed to measure the quality of post-training classroom teaching practices by administering the self-evaluation forms. The researchers from the above-mentioned descriptive research did study teacher self-evaluation within Thai context. However, research on teachers' application of knowledge from teacher training to their classroom and factors that impede such application, especially those participating in Boot Camp, is still limited.

In summary, previous research gaps have been identified with regard to application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to classroom teaching. First, evaluation on the application of the knowledge and teaching strategies from the training program in Thai context is under-researched. Most of the previous studies were conducted based on European context. Second, a larger number of participants should be adopted in order to better represent primary school English teachers in Thailand. Third, very few researches have been conducted on the application of knowledge from Boot Camp. Most previous studies only touched on participants' satisfaction towards Boot Camp. To fill in these gaps, this study therefore tried to come up with a self-evaluation of a teacher training program, Boot Camp, in Thai state primary schools in the upper south. The study focused on the extent of primary school English teachers' application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices and factors (if any) that hinder such application.

Research Questions

This study addresses the following questions:

1. To what extent do primary school English teachers apply what they learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices?

2. What are the factors (if any) that hinder primary school English teachers from such application?

Research Methodology

A mixed-method research design was employed to meet the aims and objectives of a study which cannot be accomplished by quantitative or qualitative methods alone. This section described participants, instruments, data collection, and data analysis.

Participants

The participants of this study were primary school English teachers with Thai nationality at public primary schools in upper southern Thailand which includes eight provinces: Chumpon, Ranong, Surat Thani, Phang Nga, Phuket, Krabi, Nakorn Si Thammarat, and Trang. The participants were 100 teachers selected by purposive sampling making 15 per cent of a total of 665 primary school English teachers who attended the Boot Camp, Batch 1-19 during October 2016 – November 2018. The purposive sampling was suitable for providing a representation of a diverse range of participants relevant to an attendance of Boot Camp. The teachers were at the age range of 25-40 and hold a bachelor's degree with both English and non-English majors. They were both male and female with 3-15 years of English teaching experience. All participants were asked for a prior consent to participate in the study via e-mail and telephone.

Instruments

The instruments used in this study included questionnaires and interviews which are described in detail in this section.

1) Questionnaire

A questionnaire was administered to the participants to find out their application of knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices. The questionnaire contained three parts. The first part aimed to gather demographic information about the participants including years of English teaching experience, educational background, gender, age, location, and personal contact (e-mail address, phone number).

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 43 items with a five-point Likert scale. The items focusing on knowledge, activities, and techniques covered in all batches of the three-week Boot Camp in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University Center. It was used to explore the extent that the participants apply what they learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices. Since there was the same standard of trainers' proficiency, educational curriculum, and time duration in every batch, to develop items for this part, the questionnaire items were constructed based on Boot Camp documents (Taylor, 2017) and the researcher's observation of Boot Camp, Batch 20 to verify the content of the training. The questionnaire items addressed the teachers' application of knowledge, activities, and techniques actually covered in the three-week Boot Camp. The questionnaire items elicited classroom teaching practices in which the knowledge, activities, and techniques covered in Boot Camp were applied. Here are some examples:

       1. English teaching techniques/methods
             1.1 Using miming in vocabulary teaching
             1.2 Using Pelmanism in vocabulary teaching
             1.3 Using touch the board activity in vocabulary teaching
             1.4 Using back to the board activity in vocabulary teaching
             1.5 Teaching Phonics

The teachers responded to the questionnaire items by indicating the frequency of their application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices on a

five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 meaning never apply to their classroom teaching practices to 5 meaning always apply to their classroom teaching practices.

The third part of the questionnaire was presented in form of open-ended questions for teachers to give further information about their application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their class. Examples of open-ended questions are as follows:

1. What techniques/knowledge/skills which are not mentioned above do you apply to your classroom?

2. Which techniques/knowledge/skills from Boot Camp are too difficult to apply to your classroom? Why is that so?

3. What are the advantages of attending Boot Camp?

The questionnaire was distributed to three Thai EFL lecturers to check validity in the form of Items Objective Congruence Index (Hu & Nassaji, 2012) and the construction of the questionnaire. After the items have been checked for validity by the panel, the questionnaire was revised and piloted with 30 primary school English teachers in upper southern Thailand schools who have attended the Boot Camp, Batch 1-19 in Nakhon Si Thammarat Rajabhat University Center. The pilot group were selected by purposive sampling based on these criteria: participants in Boot Camp from different batches (Batch 1-19) and primary school English teachers with various ages. They were primary school English teachers in upper southern region who have attended Boot Camp before and they were not participants in the main study. The questionnaire was administered via printed copy, but the online version of the questionnaire (Google Docs) was also an option for those teachers who could not be practically reached in person. The pilot result was analyzed for the reliability of the questionnaire using the Cronbach's alpha and the questionnaire was checked for any ambiguities. The result of the pilot showed that the Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the questionnaire was .895 indicating that the questionnaire was reliable.

2) Semi-structured Interviews

The interview seems to be an appropriate method for naturally eliciting participants' responses (Patton, 2002). In addition, it was used to expand on the information from the questionnaire. To explore the teachers' application of knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices, the semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 primary English teachers constituting 15% of the sample of this study. They were selected by purposive sampling using these criteria: participants in Boot Camp from different batches (Batch 1-19), a representative mix of school sizes, and primary school English teachers with various ages. In the interview, the researcher elicited primary school English teachers' views and comments on the factors (if any) that hinder them from such application. There were four questions in the interview session. The interview questions were constructed based on the teachers' responses to the questionnaire. They were both close and open-ended questions. These questions were intended to elicit qualitative statements which participants expressed themselves further and to gain in-depth information. The interviews were conducted in Thai to facilitate those teachers with a non-English major. The interview questions were as follows:

1. What technique/knowledges/skill from Boot Camp do you apply to your class? How often? Why is that so?
2. What technique/knowledges/skill from Boot Camp do you rarely apply to your class? How often? Why is that so?
3. Are there any other factors that impede the application of technique/knowledge/skill from Boot Camp to your class?
4. Do you have any recommendations for the future Boot Camp curriculum? What

are they?

Data Collection
Administration of Questionnaire
The questionnaire was administered in October 2018 via Google Docs to 100 teachers who attended the Boot Camp, Batch 1-19.

Conducting Semi-structured Interviews
This interview stage was conducted in Thai in person, or via telephone when it was not practical to reach the participants in person in January, 2019. Before interviewing, the researcher asked the participants for permission to audio record the session. Each interview took 20-30 minutes. The procedures of the interview were as follows:
- The researcher introduced herself, the research title, and the purpose of the interview. The researcher asked for permission to audio record and explain why it needed audio recording.
- The researcher started the interview with questions about teacher's personal information: years of English teaching experiences, educational background, the level of the students they are teaching.
- The researcher began with the information related to the teachers' responses to the questionnaire, and asked in-depth questions as shown above.

Results and Discussion
Application of Knowledge/Skills Learnt from Boot Camp
To answer the research question about the extent that primary school English teachers apply obtained knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices, Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics on the frequency of application of the obtained knowledge/skills.

Table 1: Frequency of Application of the Knowledge/Skills Learnt from Boot Camp to Classroom Teaching Practices

Application of knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp	$\bar{x}$	Meaning
1. English teaching techniques/methods	*3.26*	*Sometimes*
1.1 Using miming in vocabulary teaching	3.62	Often
1.2 Using Pelmanism in vocabulary teaching	4.12	Often
1.3 Using touch the board activity in vocabulary teaching	3.58	Often
1.4 Using back to the board activity in vocabulary teaching	3.35	Sometimes
1.5 Teaching Phonics	3.00	Sometimes
1.6 Using dictation in vocabulary teaching	3.58	Often
1.7 Using Total Physical Response (TPR) technique	3.56	Often
1.8 Teaching communicative grammar	3.52	Often
1.9 Using substitution table in grammar teaching	3.29	Sometimes
1.10 Using repetition drill in grammar teaching	4.17	Often
1.11 Using picture survey mingle in speaking-listening teaching	2.70	Sometimes
1.12 Using role-play in speaking teaching	2.56	Rarely
1.13 Using pre-while-post reading technique	2.43	Rarely
1.14 Using guided writing technique	2.43	Rarely
1.15 Using writing frame technique	2.18	Rarely
1.16 Using gap-filling technique	4.06	Often

Application of knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp	$\bar{x}$	Meaning
1.17 Using storytelling activity	2.56	Rarely
1.18 Integrated teaching (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)	3.88	Often
2. Using classroom language	**4.09**	*Often*
2.1 Using English in English teaching	3.58	Often
2.2 Using classroom language to give an instruction	4.58	Always
2.3 Using L1 in English class effectively	4.12	Often
2.4 Motivating students to speak English in class	4.00	Often
2.5 Waiting after asking an important question to let students think	4.18	Often
3. Using/creating teaching materials	**3.90**	*Often*
3.1 Using flashcards	4.52	Always
3.2 Using realia	3.68	Often
3.3 Using songs and chants	3.58	Often
3.4 Incorporating culture into English class	3.43	Sometimes
3.5 Using the Internet to search for teaching materials	4.43	Always
3.6 Using video clips from YouTube	3.75	Often
4. Creating a positive learning environment	**4.29**	*Always*
4.1 Encouraging interaction between teacher and students	4.29	Always
4.2 Encouraging collaborative learning among students	4.12	Often
4.3 Encouraging students when they do not work well	4.52	Always
4.4 Praising good behavior	4.68	Always
4.5 Using reward systems to motivate students	3.62	Often
4.6 Encouraging students to ask about unclear topics	4.37	Always
4.7 Showing equal interest in each student	4.43	Always
5. Using assessment for learning	**3.16**	*Sometimes*
5.1 Observing class and noting down students' progress	3.52	Often
5.2 Using self-assessment	2.93	Sometimes
5.3 Using peer assessment	2.61	Sometimes
5.4 Using portfolio	3.12	Sometimes
5.5 Giving feedbacks after students completed an activity	3.75	Often
6. Writing lesson plans	**3.15**	*Sometimes*
6.1 Lead-in, Presentation, Practice, and Production	3.17	Sometimes
6.2 TTT (Test-Teach-Test)	3.12	Sometimes
Overall	**3.59**	*Often*

Overall, Table 1 shows that primary school English teachers in this study often applied knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices ($\bar{x}$=3.59). In particular, first, the teachers always applied the obtained knowledge/skills in creating a positive learning environment area ($\bar{x}$=4.29). Second, they reported that they often applied the obtained knowledge/skills in these two areas: using classroom language ($\bar{x}$=4.09) and using/creating teaching materials ($\bar{x}$=3.90). Third, they revealed that they sometimes applied obtained knowledge/skills in the following three areas: English teaching techniques/methods ($\bar{x}$=3.26), using assessment for learning ($\bar{x}$=3.16), and writing lesson plans ($\bar{x}$=3.15).

Regarding the knowledge/skills in creating a positive learning environment that the teachers always applied to their class, it was found that the top three applied knowledge/skills from Boot Camp were praising good behavior ($\bar{x}$=4.68), encouraging students when they do not work well ($\bar{x}$=4.52), and showing equal interest in each student ($\bar{x}$=4.43) respectively.

A detailed exploration of the areas of using classroom language and using/creating teaching materials that teachers often applied to their class shows that the top three applied knowledge/skills from Boot Camp in using classroom language were the use of classroom language to give an instruction ($\bar{x}$=4.58), waiting after asking an important question to let students think ($\bar{x}$=4.18), and using L1 in English class effectively ($\bar{x}$=4.12) respectively. In addition, the top three applied knowledge/skills in the area of using/creating teaching materials were using flashcards ($\bar{x}$=4.52), using the Internet to search for teaching materials ($\bar{x}$=4.43), and using video clips from YouTube ($\bar{x}$=3.75) respectively.

On closer examination of the knowledge/skills in the area of English teaching techniques/methods that the teachers sometimes applied to their classroom teaching practices, it was revealed that the top three applied knowledge/skills from Boot Camp were the use of repetition drill in grammar teaching ($\bar{x}$=4.17), Pelmanism in vocabulary teaching ($\bar{x}$=4.12), and gap-filling technique ($\bar{x}$=4.06) respectively. In addition, an extensive review of the area of using assessment for learning and writing lesson plans that the teachers sometimes applied to their class showed the top three applied knowledge/skills which were giving feedbacks after students completed an activity ($\bar{x}$=3.75), observing class and noting down students' progress ($\bar{x}$=3.52), and using lead-in, presentation, practice, and production process ($\bar{x}$=3.17) respectively.

To summarize, the primary school English teachers did apply knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp. The extent of their application of the obtained knowledge/skills in various areas was placed in order as follows: 1) creating a positive learning environment: praising good behavior, encouraging students when they do not work well, and showing equal interest in each student; 2) using classroom language: using classroom language to give an instruction, waiting after asking an important question to let students think, and using L1 in English class effectively; 3) using/creating teaching materials: flashcards, the Internet to search for teaching materials, and video clips from YouTube; 4) English teaching techniques/methods: using repetition drill in grammar teaching, using Pelmanism in vocabulary teaching, and using gap-filling technique; and 5) using assessment for learning and writing lesson plans: giving feedbacks after students completed an activity, observing class and noting down students' progress, and using lead-in, presentation, practice, and production process.

Based on the results, it is clearly seen that the knowledge/skills in the area of creating a positive learning environment that were the most frequently applied by the primary school English teachers in this study were praising good behavior, encouraging students when they do not work well, and showing equal interest in each student. This result is consistent with those of previous studies by Moely et al. (1992) and Hamman et al. (2000) who focused on creating a positive learning environment in classroom. They found that teachers of elementary level spent only little time on teaching methodology. Instead, they generally spent most of the time creating a positive learning environment. The reason is that if a positive classroom atmosphere was created, students would learn better and engage more. In addition, creating a positive learning environment was one of the most effective and powerful tools which teachers could use to encourage children's learning, especially beginner-level students with little or no knowledge of English. Cheng (1994) showed that the teachers in her study created a positive learning environment by encouraging the students with positive feedback. This finding supported the importance of praising good behavior in the classroom environment which the teachers in this study most frequently applied to their teaching practice. One possible reason would be that children, by nature, are glad to be praised. An

unpleasant situation of competition could occur when children heard their friends being praised while they were not. The teachers should, then, try to praise students more often and find something positive to say to each student.

Although overall the primary school English teachers in this study sometimes applied the knowledge/skills concerning English teaching techniques/methods learnt from Boot Camp to their classroom, it should be pointed out that they rarely applied storytelling and role-play activity to their classroom teaching practices. According to the interviews, teachers themselves played a crucial role in applying knowledge/skills from Boot Camp. They admitted that limited knowledge and teaching techniques impeded their communicative teaching performance. This result supported previous studies by Noom-ura (2013) and Saengboon (2017) suggesting that Thai teachers still needed more assistance and training in English teaching and proficiency improvement, particularly in communicative skills. In addition to storytelling and role-play activity, the teachers revealed that they rarely applied pre-while-post reading, guided writing, and writing frame techniques in their classes. This happened because young learners of elementary level in rural areas lack fundamental English background such as vocabulary, grammar, and structure. Pre-while-post reading, guided writing, and writing frame techniques were not suitable for primary school students whose English proficiency is quite low. These results reflect those of previous studies (Inprasit, 2016; Kwon, 2017) indicating that teachers had difficulty in using complicated activities with low English proficiency students or those resisting group work. These results seem to suggest that teachers needed more training in the use of simple language or visual aids to motivate and engage low-proficiency students in class.

Factors Hindering Primary School English Teachers' Application of Knowledge/Skills Learnt from Boot Camp to Their Classroom Teaching Practices
To answer research question about factors that hinder primary school English teachers from their application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices, the interviews were first transcribed. Then the interview notes and transcriptions were analyzed through thematic open coding techniques which aimed to find common patterns across a data set. As a result of the interview data analysis, the teachers' views and comments on the factors that hinder them from application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices were classified into three main categories: 1) teacher factors, 2) student factors, and 3) school factors.

Teacher Factors
The interviewees pointed out some difficulties which prevented the primary school English teachers from applying what they learnt from Boot Camp. The analysis of the interview data revealed two major limitations related to the teachers in this study: their lack of English speaking skill and their personality.
  1) Lack of English Speaking Skill
  Two interviewees (T5 and T14) stated that to use classroom language as a medium of instruction, teachers need to be skilled at English speaking. They revealed that lacking English speaking skills hindered their application of the knowledge and skills they learnt from Boot Camp such as Total Physical Response (TPR) technique and communicative language teaching and it might take a while to develop ones' speaking skills. An extract from the interview with a teacher (T5) illustrates this limitation.

> T5: I got used to speaking English with Thai accent. After I attended Boot
> Camp, I tried so hard to speak English fluently and correctly in my class to be
> a role model for my students. However, I still cannot do the best of me, I

      rarely use English as a medium of instruction. I still speak Thai in the class to
      avoid students' confusion.

2) Teachers' Personality

Five out of fifteen teachers revealed that they were introverted. Two of them (T2 and T11) expressed that they spent less time interacting with their students. Noise and chaos often overwhelmed them; therefore, they usually utilized a variety of English media from the Internet to draw young students' attention instead. While the other three interviewees (T9, T12, and T15) stated that they were not good at singing and telling stories which were important tools to create fun and positive learning environment for all students. The following comments were extracted from the interviews with T2 and T15.

      T2: Young students are typically active; they have a lot of energy. When it
      comes to games or activities, it makes the classroom chaotic. As an introvert
      who tries to spend time interacting with those energic students, I have to draw
      their attention with songs and video clips from YouTube or have them review
      the vocabulary they learnt in the last class.

      T15: To me, it is very uncomfortable to teach and apply songs and chants in
      class since I am bad at dancing and singing.

Student Factors

The second group of factors which obstructs the primary school English teachers' application of the knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp deals with students. They are students' low English proficiency and their familiarity with traditional teaching approach.

      1) Students' Low English Proficiency

Five interviewees (T1, T6, T8, T10, and T12) believed that students' low English proficiency was one of the main limitations deterring their application of the knowledge/skills from Boot Camp. They admitted that reading for comprehension and role-play were not suitable for primary school students. They were more appropriate for students with higher English proficiency than those with lower English proficiency. Indeed, most of the students in almost every class have limited vocabulary, English structures, and pronunciation to participate in role-play and reading for comprehension activities. The following concerns are common:

      T6: I found it very challenging to teach reading for comprehension because the
      students are illiterate and cannot understand what I attempted to convey.
      Especially, reading not only deals with vocabulary but also comprehension.

      T12: Students cannot speak long in English sentences. When they do role-
      playing, they communicate in English by memorizing instead of understanding.

      2) Students' Familiarity with Traditional Teaching Approach

Two interviewees (T3 and T13) considered students' familiarity with traditional teaching approach one of the barriers the teachers faced in teaching phonics. Nevertheless, every teacher has their own way of teaching based on the teaching methodology they adopted. One of the interviewees (T3) considered students' familiarity with traditional teaching approach an obstacle for teachers to apply new knowledge. The following comment illustrates the point:

      T3: When the students were in kindergartens, they were taught how to
      pronounce English alphabets which was different from phonics instruction.
      The knowledge/skills they were taught in the early age might be deeply rooted
      and it was found quite difficult to replace it with the knowledge of phonics.

School Factors

The third group of factors that impedes the application of knowledge/skills the primary school English teachers learnt from Boot Camp related to their school context. Based on the interview data, two major constraints were identified: large classes and shortage of technology and teaching materials in classroom.

1) Large Classes

Four interviewees (T2, T4, T8, and T14) mentioned large classes as one of the barriers to applying the knowledge/skills from Boot Camp. The interviewees asserted that it is challenging to apply activities learnt from Boot Camp such as touch the board and gap-filling technique with more than 30 students in a classroom since monitoring activities in large classes is more complicated than in small classes. The following comments by T2 and T8 supported the point:

T2: In a class with more than 30 students, it is difficult for me to monitor and give the students thorough counseling. Therefore, I usually divide them into small groups and it takes a while for me to observe and walk around the class.

T8: Some teaching techniques/activities are inappropriate for young students, especially young students in a large class such as role-play, teaching reading, and touch the board activity.

2) Shortage of Technology and Teaching Materials in Classroom

Three interviewees (T1, T6, and T14) referred to limited technology and teaching materials as limitations to apply knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to classrooms. In rural Thailand, most public schools face a lack of technology and teaching materials. The interviewees revealed that inadequate technology and teaching materials discourage the proper and positive classroom environment. The students do not have the opportunity to benefit from the advantage of technology such as computer, video clips, projector screen, etc. Thus, to use songs, video clips from YouTube, and Internet to search for teaching materials was not feasible in these conditions. The following comments were extracted from the interviews with T6 and T14.

T6: I have been teaching for six years and have been working in two rural public primary schools. There are no teaching materials and technology such as a projector screen and the Internet available in those schools. I, myself, had to sing songs in class instead of playing some songs from YouTube. It would be better if the government provided the technology and teaching materials for every school in Thailand.

T14: I have a few problems with teaching phonics and pronouncing some words. I think I could teach phonics better with video clips from the Internet which explain how to pronounce a word in details. However, my school lacks funds for supplying the electronic teaching materials to the teachers.

The interviews with the primary school English teachers in the study revealed that factors that hinder their application of the knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom teaching practices are related to the teachers, the students, and school contexts. Firstly, the interviewees indicated that teachers' lack of English speaking skill and their personality result in ineffective application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their class. Even though the majority of the teachers often applied communicative language teaching in their classroom, a few of them reported that their classroom language was still predominantly Thai. They asserted that they heavily drew upon translation and memorization of dialogues from text books in their classroom. Moreover, although on average the primary school English teachers frequently applied the Total Physical Response (TPR) technique in their classroom as reported earlier in Table 1, some teachers who are introverted could not apply the TPR technique to their teaching practices. These results echo those of previous studies by Inprasit (2016) which revealed that inadequate English proficiency, particularly in

communicative skills hindered teachers from applying the new knowledge to their classroom and teachers frequently used repetition and grammar translation in their class. As for the present study, some teachers in the interview session might think the students can quickly learn by memorizing information through repetition and note-taking. Therefore, it was easier for them to plan and deliver such information-packed lessons. Moreover, it is sensible that some of the teachers in this study might try to avoid chaos which emerged during the communicative activities. Most importantly, they were aware of their lack of English speaking skill, therefore, they were not confident in speaking English and avoided it for fear that the students would imitate their wrong pronunciation or Thai accent.

Secondly, the application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp involved not only teachers, but also students. Based on evidence from the interview, the interviewees reported that the limitations of their application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp related to the students' low English proficiency. Some found it difficult to teach reading for comprehension and to do role-play with students who had limited vocabulary and structure. This result was similar to the study of Huang (2016) and Chang (2010) which indicated that almost all of the participants reported that they rarely had their students do role-play. Such findings can be explained that those students in the present study fear of a limited vocabulary and structure impeded students to speak out and read. As they were hesitant to speak out what they thought and they were afraid of making mistakes in front of their friends. It might take much time until they confidently assure that they can communicate in English. It would be better if the teachers encouraged using English in classroom more often to make students feel comfortable to frequently use it. For example, they can promote communicative activities in class, present themselves as an English speaker, and try not to translate every sentence in Thai.

Lastly, the school context in which the primary school English teachers work did contribute to the extent of their application of knowledge/skills learnt from Boot Camp. That the teachers in this study were hindered by the large class size as well as shortage of technology and teaching materials is because most schools in the countryside lack electronic teaching aids and access to the Internet. The results of this present study suggest that teachers need administrative support to overcome these classroom constraints. Teaching performance would be more effective if class size was reduced and access to technology and teaching materials teaching materials were well-provided.

Conclusions and Suggestions

Generally, primary school English teachers in upper southern Thailand often applied their knowledge/skills from Boot Camp to their classroom. The extent of their application of the obtained knowledge/skills in various areas was placed in order as follows: 1) creating a positive learning environment, 2) using classroom language, 3) using/creating teaching materials, 4) English teaching techniques/methods, and 5) using assessment for learning and writing lesson plans. There were several evidences from this study showing that Boot Camp was effective. First, that the teacher training helped the teachers to acquire new knowledge and apply it with real students in real classroom settings makes it possible to consider Boot Camp an effective teacher training program. In addition, another evidence from this study was collected through items in the questionnaire in which the teachers rated their teaching efficiency before and after their Boot Camp attendance. The results revealed that 66% of them rated themselves moderately effective in teaching English before Boot Camp attendance while 77% of them rated themselves very effective in teaching English after Boot Camp attendance. Another supportive evidence was given in the interview sessions, *'I enjoyed every lesson in Boot Camp and found the teaching techniques taught in Boot Camp useful. The trainer enlightened me on how to teach communicative English with new techniques as I have*

never been trained before…' Indeed, all participating teachers were satisfied with the Boot Camp content and they requested more training similar to Boot Camp.

Nevertheless, the primary school English teachers reported that the factors that impeded their application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp related to the teachers, the students, and the school context. As pointed out by the teachers in this study, to effectively apply such communicative activities from Boot Camp to their classroom, the teachers should have solid foundation in speaking and listening skills and be a good model for their students. In addition, the teachers should encourage students who are bashful and uncertain to use English in real-life situations to be more confident in using it. Moreover, as recommended by most of the interviewees, when the classroom conditions in the Thai local school context are not favorable, Boot Camp organizers can support the teachers' application by designing appropriate, practical and feasible content that can increase students' opportunities to practice English. For instance, to make the Boot Camp content more appropriate for the local environment in Thailand in which the technology and teaching materials were insufficient and students' English proficiency was limited, the Boot Camp organizers may promote using realia and handmade teaching materials. Furthermore, it would be better if the curricula in Boot Camp were streamlined to create more practical and suitable content for the teachers to increase students' engagement in classroom.

This study has a few limitations. It was limited to data on teachers' perspectives. Further research could be conducted to explore students' perspectives of their learning outcomes and their reactions to teaching practices of the teachers who had attended Boot Camp. In addition, future researchers could adopt a qualitative paradigm including class observation of teachers' teaching performance before and after attending the Boot Camp. Although this study investigated the application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp in the primary school context, secondary school context would be a possible area for further research. Since secondary school students have more foundation in English grammar and vocabulary, it is interesting to investigate whether there are differences of the application of knowledge/skills from Boot Camp between primary school and secondary school English teachers. Moreover, investigation of factors that enhance the application as well as the English proficiency of participating teachers be further conducted to address the efficacy of Boot Camp.

About the Authors

Netchanok Sunyakul: a student of the Master of Arts Program in Teaching English as an International Language at Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. Her academic interests include teacher education and professional development.

Adisa Teo: an associate professor of English at the Department of Languages and Linguistics, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Thailand. As a Fulbright scholar, she completed her Ph.D. in Education with special emphasis on Second Language Acquisition and Teacher Education from University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A. Her interests include second language acquisition, English as an international language, English language teaching, writing, course/materials design and evaluation, and teacher education.

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