REVIEW OF LITERATURE - I
Introduction to Chapter II

After a brief discussion on the importance of intensive reading of prescribed texts with special reference to cloze procedure and its application to a classroom situation, the forthcoming chapter talks reviews the literature on cloze procedure in ESL (English as a Second Language) situations.

Starting from the invention of cloze procedure by Wilson Taylor in 1953, the second chapter elaborates on the review of literature on (a) the history of cloze instruction, (b) the significant differences between ordinary filling-up-exercise with discrete deletion and cloze exercise, (c) the role of redundancies in cloze procedure, (d) different types of cloze exercises viz., strict cloze, dictation cloze, conversational cloze, synonym/antonym substitution cloze, (3) discussion on exact word Vs acceptable word replacement in ESL (English as a Second Language) situations, (f) interpretation of scores, (g) the justification for rephrased/simplified versions of the original text for teaching purposes in this project, (h) the rationality of deletion ratio for the project and (i) the scoring procedure.
II. A REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON CLOZE PROCEDURE

As the focus of the research is on cloze procedure in the context of second language learning, a review of cloze technique in the context of second language learning situations becomes imperative.

It was Wilson Taylor who invented the cloze procedure in 1953. He designed the procedure in which words were systematically deleted from a continuous reading passage and were replaced by blanks of uniform length. The term 'cloze' is an intentional corruption of the verb 'to close', and is a reflection of the law of closure, one of the major concepts of Gestalt psychology.

The famous trio who founded Gestalt psychology, Max Wertheimer (1880-1943), Wolfgang Kohler (1887-1967) and Kurt Koffka (1886-1941) had developed much of their conceptual framework in Germany. Later, they continued their work in the United States. Their concepts influenced generations of psychologists. Gestalt theory views concrete phenomena, such as visual figures, as well as abstract phenomena, such as memory or learning, as organized structures or wholes, rather than as combinations of separate units. Both physical and psychological processes of human beings have a tendency to complete figures or acts based on insight formation and perceptual thinking.
The deletion of words in a cloze text is divided into two categories. One is the "fixed ratio deletion" cloze and another is "rational deletion cloze". While the former demands a systematic deletion of words at every nth word, the latter facilitates deletion of nouns, verbs, adverbs, pronouns, prepositions, adjectives and articles. "The strict approach requires deletions be made without exception, even if the word deleted is a proper name, a date or a numeral. The liberal approach recommends the deletion of an immediately preceding or following in such instances."3. The strict cloze was the device used by Wilson Taylor.

The cloze procedure is not just a fill-in-the-blank exercise. The learners' thought processes are much involved in terms of reading the text both at micro and macro level. Wilson Taylor himself was aware of the fundamental difference between fill in the blank exercises over single isolated sentences and cloze exercises ranging over substantial portions of connected discourse. "Cloze

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3Ibid.
procedure deals with contextually appropriate series of blanks, not isolated ones". 4

The cloze procedure does not deal directly with specific meaning. Instead it repeatedly samples 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 he meant.

The cloze procedure has wide range of applications. It can be used to assess the difficulty of texts both in L1 and L2 situations. It is considered to be an empirical measure which uses the performance of subjects upon the text being measured to obtain the readability level. Cloze procedure involves accuracy, in that the subject cannot hope to fill in the blanks if he cannot recognize the majority of words given. It involves a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. Further, it necessitates understanding of the text and therefore comprehension. As such it is a valid measure of total readability in relation to other formulae of readability. The procedure would provide information complementary to the teacher's own subjective assessments of graded materials. No other readability measure so effectively captures the interactions of the reader with

4 Ibid.
passage as does the cloze procedure." According to Trever H. Cairney "Cloze Procedure is seen as a valuable way of heightening engagement with factual text, of encouraging students to read for deeper meaning".

It can be used to rate bilinguals. An Australian doctoral dissertation by Jonathan Anderson completed in 1969 showed remarkably high reliability and validity coefficients for cloze tests of fifty items or more used with non-native speakers of English. A Master's thesis at ULCA by Christine Conrad yielded similar results in 1970. Further research by Tetsuro Chihara et al. conducted for Japanese adults studying English as a foreign language revealed that "cloze items embedded in normal prose are sensitive to discourse constraints ranging beyond the immediate limits of a single sentence." However, Tony Deyes is of the opinion "if deleted items are limited to those drawn from the cohesive system, we remain at the level of text cloze rather than discourse cloze".

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7 Chihara Tetsuro et al., 'Are cloze items sensitive to constraints across sentences?' Language Learning, Vol.27, No.1, P. 63.

support from Widdowson's binary concept of text and 'discourse'. The subject's language system alone is called for, in a text unlike a discourse where the understanding of communication as a whole operates.

One of the popular applications of cloze procedure is in the context of estimating reading comprehension. Generally, multiple-choice comprehension questions, currently followed in TOEFL, GRE reading comprehension passages, are given to test the reading ability of the subjects. The difference between such multiple-choice comprehension questions and cloze items is the amount of reading or word-process done by the subject/learner in a cloze instruction class. The multiple choice questions stand away from the passage whereas in cloze the items form part of the text/passage itself. Therefore, a detailed reading of the text becomes imperative, whereas in multiple-choice questions some answers can be appropriately supplied without necessarily reading the passage in depth and detail. "Teaching comprehension means encouraging students to work on the text, using all available cues plus reasoning to reach the best possible interpretation". ⁹

Cloze procedure is applied in studying textual constraints also. The predictability of a word in a given

context was generally inversely proportional to the size of the grammatical class. The larger the number of words in a given grammatical category, the harder it is to predict a particular member of that in a sentence context. Articles and pronouns, for example, are easier to replace, whereas verbs, adverbs and adjectives pose a problem to the second language learner whose word power is limited.

The cloze procedure has been used for teaching stylistic sensitivity and cloze comes nearer to aligning with natural processing abilities, and especially when used in a discourse-sensitive way. Jonz in his experiment on cloze with non-native speakers concludes that "Cloze Procedure" is sensitive to aspects of comprehension other than that of simple local redundancy".10

Redundancy is one of the properties of language which facilitates missing symbols from the context. Highly redundant texts tend to be repetitive and contain relatively little information per symbol. The greater the second language learner perceives in a given passage, the greater the chance he will understand it. In the context of cloze, a mutilated message, "the correspondence between the ESL student's conception of English redundancy and the actual rules of English redundancy becomes an index of his overall

An efficient language learner/user samples the passage by relying on the redundancy of language. He predicts structures, tests them against the semantic context which he builds up from the situation and the ongoing discourse and then confirms or disconfirms as he processes further language.

Redundancy is crucial to proficient reading. Redundancy may be in terms of syntax: replace pronouns with their referents; and a referent to any ambiguous 'this', replace dummy subjects such as 'it' and 'there' with real subjects in any sentence or clause and finally change passives to actives. Semantic redundancy can be defined as "additions to the text in the following forms: the addition of examples in phrases beginning with 'for example' or 'for instance', the addition of specification of particulars, in phrases beginning with 'such as' or the clarification of term or concept".

While substantiating the redundancy of language, Bastidas opines, "This redundancy is realized through various types of contexts ie., repetitions, synonyms, antonyms, metaphors, examples, definitions, details, ...

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comprehension of comparisons, facts, interpretations etc. Comprehension of the whole can contribute to comprehension of the parts, and unfamiliar words are often deciphered and even learned in the context.

The relationship between the sounds of the reader's spoken language and the written form of language is called graphophonic information. The following table illustrates this.

**Table 1**
Simple to More Complex Aspects of Graphophonic Information Acquired During the Course of Reading Acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Which letters are the same?</td>
<td>a, p, d, b, a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a, r, m, n, a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Find the words.</td>
<td>theboywenttotown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does s change its sound in these words?</td>
<td>was-saw; stubs-bats; swap-wasps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. How are the word pairs similar?</td>
<td>law-saw; slaw-slim; brim-rim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Which word is an acceptable word in English orthography?</td>
<td>flange-ifagne; aks-ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. How is the o in these words pronounced?</td>
<td>dot-hop; dote-hope; boat-toad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. How is the o in these words pronounced?</td>
<td>impotent-important-potentate-pot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How many syllables do the words have?</td>
<td>bragged-ragged; antioch-meander</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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9. How is city pronounced in these words?  
   city-elasticity-electricity-stoicacity

10. Can the pronunciation for these words be distinguished outside their use in context?  
   read-read

11. Does context determine both meaning and pronunciation?  
   I entered the contest.  
   I want to contest the vote.  
   Close the door.  
   Sit close to the door.

The interrelationship among words in a sentence and among sentences which follow from the grammar of the reader's spoken/written language is called syntactic information.

Table 2
Examples of the Increasing Sophistication of the Reader's Ability to Use Syntactic Cues to Construct Meaning During Reading

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What grammatical class form in each missing word?</td>
<td>I --- milk. --- boy ate nuts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Are the groups of words sensible or nonsense?</td>
<td>ball boy the kicked the kicked ball boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Which is the most natural way to group these words when reading?</td>
<td>The/boy/sat/down The/boy/sat/down The/boy/sat/down The/boy/sat/down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What word comes next?</td>
<td>The boy ate a chocolate candy ---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Questions</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Are these sentences different in reading?</td>
<td>Before Tom washed the dishes, he watched television. Tom watched television and latter washed the dishes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Can you answer the literal questions about?</td>
<td>The roggle raznacked the sleefary because the sleefary had afranned his abelaide. Who raznacked the sleefary? What was it that the sleefary afranned? Why did the roggle raznack the sleefary?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Can you fill in the missing words?</td>
<td>----boy fell ---- bench-----mother put--- ---bed. Then---called--- doctor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Does each sentence have two meanings or one meaning?</td>
<td>What's the latest doDe? The boss was asked to stop drinking in the office. I left him convinced he was a fool. Do not break bread or roll in your soup The butler stood by the door and called the guests names as they arrived. The entire population has been broken down by age and sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. To whom or what do the italicized words refer?</td>
<td>My mother and father run a little grocery store. They work very hard. He never comes home until after I am in bed. She is at home when I get there after school though. That makes me glad. Sometimes I visit the store after school to see my father. If it is busy, he sends me home. It makes me sad to go home.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The order of examples in Table 2 roughly represents the order of syntactic redundancy beginning readers come to be increasingly aware of and learn to actively use to become proficient readers. The first example illustrates the awareness of the grammatical form of a word purely by its order in a sentence without any available graphic information. The second illustrates the difference between acceptable and unacceptable word order for sentences. Example three illustrates the intuitive sense of information and word grouping signaled by syntax. The fourth suggests that syntactic redundancy combines with meaning acts as an aid to the prediction of words within a sentence. The fifth example indicates that syntax allows the reader to establish equivalent sentence meanings. The sixth shows that even if some nouns and verbs are not known to the reader, the syntax will allow the reader to preserve the literal information necessary to answer literal questions. The seventh example suggests that many of the words which signal word order can be predicted by proficient readers without any graphic knowledge of them. The eighth example illustrates that syntactic ambiguity leads to semantic ambiguity. Unless the reader becomes aware of this, it is impossible to assign alternative semantic readings of syntactically ambiguous sentences. The ninth example illustrates how anaphora operates in text. Anaphora refers to the determination of a
All the relationships with a language that establish meaning for a writer or reader may be considered semantic information. Readers must actively use their store of word meanings and knowledge of the world to organize word groups into sentences to connect consecutive sentences, to interrelate the sentences of a complete text, and to construct meaning when meaning gaps occur among the word groups or sentences being processed.

The following table illustrates some of the sources of semantic information available to the reader while reading printed material.

Table 3
Examples of the Increasing Range of Semantic Cues which Readers Learn to Spontaneously Use during Reading to Get Meaning from Text

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Understanding multiple meanings.</td>
<td>The policeman brought a heavy club to the riot. The policeman is in the chess club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Understanding lexical ambiguity.</td>
<td>The policeman took the club to the baseball game.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Understanding multiplicity of pronoun referents.</td>
<td>John persuaded the policeman that he should leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>John left him standing there.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Understanding metaphor.</td>
<td>He is tied up at the meeting and won't be able to attend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The train roared in like the ride exactly on time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The man is a devil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Still water runs deep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Understanding semantic ambiguity.</td>
<td>Mayor asks the police to stop drinking in the city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Understanding the function of meaning as text. In which of these two passages do the sentences make up a meaningful message?</td>
<td>They were golden delicious apples. Cider is made from apples. I like to eat apple pies which are packed with apples. The men set out. Fish really can't swim faster than 75 miles per hour. Sometimes I feel like sailing on the ocean. Some women adore orchids. Now here is a picture of what a hobbit looks like. A short dwarfish figure, a cherub face, and hair on the bottom of the feet are the key hobbit features. What brave little people they were. Just because no one has seen a hobbit in the last 1,000 years does not mean they might not have once existed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each of the examples in Table 3 illustrates understanding the reader must have in order to get meaning from sentences and longer texts. The first two examples illustrate that the reader must be able to assign semantic
description or meaning to words independent of syntax. The third example points out that the meaning assigned to pronouns often depends on the meaning context of following or preceding sentences. The fourth illustrates that words may be combined in ways to bring immediate experience into relation with already acquired and familiar concepts. Metaphorical language is often intentionally ambiguous in order to evoke imagery and enrich the entire meaning in context in which it occurs. The fifth example illustrates that the meaning of an entire sentence can be ambiguous and cannot be clarified without reference to the larger context in which it is found. Example six stresses that the reader must come to realize that the sentences of a text must tie together and make sense as a unified whole. This knowledge is the gateway to learning a vast network of forms of semantic redundancy which readers must use to weave together long forms of discourse in a manner that makes sense.

As cloze procedure ideally demands the right word in the right place, the learners are engaged in an editing process while doing a cloze text. In a multiple-choice cloze, where the stem consisting of an incomplete statement and two or more options consisting of answers to the blank, the learners make clues, revise, or reject the guesses and
finalise an appropriate choice. "This editing then actually facilitates, or is a part of the comprehension process.14

Cloze procedure can be used as an instructional device in an ESL situation. By using the prescribed texts of learners under study, cloze can be applied to (a) tap the interlanguage of the learners, (b) provide blanks to initiate and sustain discussion of grammatical correctness, semantic appropriacy and (c) develop reading skills. In more specific terms, the texts provide both the 'input' and the context for 'output'.

As already mentioned, a cloze exercise is not mere fill-in the-gap exercise. Brian Seaton says that "cloze tests should not be compared with simple blank filling tests".15 Norman Coe brings out the differences between 'a classic cloze text' and a gap filling exercise. "A classic cloze text is not specially written for TEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language); nor modified. Conversely, gap-filling exercise may be specifically written or modified".16


A classic cloze is a continuous text that can be completely understood as it stands without the preceding or following text. A gap filling exercise is usually performed in isolated sentences or pieces of text without any surrounding text.

A classic cloze text has an introduction to set the stage/scene so that students can be tuned in to the topic. A gap filling exercise does not make an attempt to tune the students' minds to the theme of the material.

After the introduction, the gaps in a cloze text are regular, thereby integrating, as far as possible, various grammatical elements like articles, prepositions and sometimes nouns and verbs. A gap filling exercise has a discrete type of elements like verb forms, articles, prepositions and other grammatical features.

However, it is left to the teacher to take or reject as many properties of classic cloze text and the modified form of cloze text. It is left to the discretion of the teacher to adopt/adapt strict classic cloze texts to suit the level of the learners. There can be no dispute over cloze texts be a continuous one, leaving out one or two statements in the beginning and at the end of the representative passage. But giving the ESL learner an unsimplified text, in a classroom situation, may not receive
the intended feedback from the learner. "The NNR (non-native reader) is often a linguistically insecure reader". The teacher can construct cloze texts in such a way so as to involve the learners in active learning. If cloze exercises are not properly constructed for teaching purposes, the procedure might not involve the anticipated learning progress. Moreover, there is nothing to be gained by requiring students to read frustration level material.

As a procedure applied in a classroom situation, cloze procedure is a problem-posing and problem-solving activity. The learner has to virtually draw on the whole range of linguistic skills like morphology, syntax, vocabulary, link words, cohesion, punctuation and register. The learner's reading process is associated with contextual cues. There is no working with words in isolation; words which are new to readers are encountered in context and explained in context. A learner is required to use the language. Both receptive and productive processes of language learning are


manifested in cloze procedure. "In fact, the learner while doing a cloze exercise negotiates with meanings of the text and constantly undertakes checking, rechecking and revising".19

Instructional methods often involve some group interaction. Brainstorming may be used to elicit possible choices for omitted words. Brainstorming, innovated by Alex Osborn, was intended for problem-identification and problem-solving in a managerial context, and insists upon active participation of all the members with the manager acting as a facilitator. Similarly, in a cloze procedure class, the teacher writes all the words on the chalkboard, both acceptable and unacceptable, and leaves the appropriate word to be chosen for discussion. As an interactive learning procedure, cloze technique has in it the major requirements of brainstorming with "co-operative learning" being an additional element. Further, similar to a brainstorming session, the interaction occurs between the text and the learner, the learner and the learner and the teacher. The teacher acts as an initiator and motivator for a better learning situation in a classroom

situation. Very rarely does the teacher owing to want of time, intervenes and directly gives the answer.²⁰

A strict cloze passage necessarily adheres to systematic deletion.

Several ELT experts like Caller and Conrad, Robinett discussing cloze as a testing device has also commended on its potential as a teaching device. Richards has proposed the use of cloze exercise as perhaps one of the most useful exercises to deal globally with many of the aspects of word knowledge.²¹ Radice has shown several advantages of cloze as an exercise in teaching report writing, business correspondence, and summary writing. Miluse Soudek has demonstrated the use of cloze as a teaching device in teaching reading in a second language. In an oral version of cloze, some items are deleted by means of pauses by the teacher or using a tape recorder, cloze items can be mutilated by noise.


A dictation cloze consists of a dictated passage with pauses for students to fill in concurrently or in a time period provided after dictation. According to Prabhu\(^2\), dictation tests rest on the theory of reading/listening with expectancies. Performance is therefore more or less successful, depending on the listeners' ability to predict certain words. Dictation may be regarded as a sentence-based test, thereby measuring the structural awareness of the listeners.

Conversational cloze passages consist of items deleted in a continuous dialogue. They are considered to provide a more exact measure of linguistic and semantic ability at the advanced level of ESL learners. An experiment by Paul Lemmon with four subjects aged 20-24 of University of Reading has shown that the "language of the advanced learner is characterised by uncertainty, that learning does not consist of process of incremental additions to a fixed store, but that backsliding occurs as well as non-critical variation and improvement."\(^2\)


investigation by Dempsy and Virgil Smith\textsuperscript{24} revealed that (1) students were more successful when responding to the written cloze procedure, (2) the aural and written cloze procedures were affected in a similar manner by the external variables of readability and content, (3) the aural cloze procedure was a reliable measure of aural language comprehension abilities.

Another variation of cloze technique is the synonym/antonym substitution, selected words in a text are not deleted but underlined and students are asked to provide contextually appropriate substitutes or exact opposites for each underlined word. This is useful and applicable to advanced level learners of English.

Other variations include deleting only the verbs or adverbials, or determiners. While omitting the articles, "the text must run together without blanks for the deleted articles, so that no clues are provided to whether or not an article is required. Students are then asked to play the

A dilemma often exists when the question of decision comes regarding exact word scoring or acceptable substitute word. According to Oller "correlations between exact word scores and contextually appropriate scores are sufficiently strong to recommend the exact word scoring for most purposes. However, research has shown that slightly finer discrimination can be achieved by the contextually appropriate method". Oller's recommendation is in the context of testing; moreover, the exact word scoring is rigid in nature and imposes strict conditions on the subjects. It places a severe limit on the range of possible synonyms. In fact, it keeps the creative reader from supplying a better word in certain contexts.

One of the advantages of exact word replacement is that it is easy to correct. However, in an instructional class where cloze is applied, contextually appropriate word method is better, for, it does not frustrate the students. The


acceptable substitute is more appropriate in a teaching situation for pedagogical and psychological reasons. It does not penalise the learners and can be used as a starting point for useful and interesting class discussion. Heaton is of the opinion that "Although research shows no difference between exact replacement and synonym scoring, some form of semantically acceptable scoring should be probably encouraged for instructional purposes. In an ESL (English as a Second Language) situation, it may be idealistic to expect the learner to fill in the exact word the author/teacher intended". A study by Loangsitongsoog, Siriporn revealed that "synonymic scoring resulted in a wide range of scores than did the exact word scoring, hence synonymic scoring was more useful in terms of predicting each subject's reading ability". While functional words, in general, may not have many answers for blanks carrying grammatical words, content words may have as many answers as possible. In a classroom situation, for pedagogic purposes, the teacher can readily accept synonyms.


teacher should encourage guessing of meaning and accepting synonyms from the students for motivating them. The teacher will find himself telling a particular student that he has the right meaning for a missing word, but that it is not word the author selected.

In an attempt to provide teachers with another alternative, Cunningham and Cunningham have developed limited cloze type. In this technique, the deleted words are randomly ordered and listed above the passage, providing the student with a limited number of choices to insert in the blanks. "Words deleted more than once are listed at the top of the passage as many times as necessary, and learners are informed that each of the words in the list can be listed only once to fill in the blanks. As in the strict cloze procedure, only exact restorations of the original words are scored as correct". 29

The Cunninghams have suggested that limited cloze has several advantages. "Apart from its easiness in constructing it, it also has the advantage of reducing some of the resistance often faced when teachers are asked to use verbatim scoring procedures". 30 Further, it avoids the

issue of supplying appropriate distractors. Its reliability and validity is, on the whole, indisputable in random deletion cloze.

The exact word scoring may be adopted when we apply cloze for testing purposes. But when we use cloze as a teaching device, contextually appropriate/acceptable word responses may provide scope for incremental learning.

**Interpretation of scores**

Different experts of cloze procedure have suggested different interpretation of the scores obtained by the learners/subjects. Joseph A. Foley suggests the following interpretative measures to assess the subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frustrational</td>
<td>below 38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructional</td>
<td>above 38% - 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>above 57% - 60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Frustrational level indicates that the cloze texts do not match the level of the ability of the learner in the target language. The learners find the material too challenging.

Instructional level: The student can manage to cope with the material with help from the teacher.
Independent scores: "Students are able to read and understand the material with relative ease. Teacher guidance is minimal."\(^{31}\)

When cloze is applied in teaching-learning situations, a higher criterion can be fixed. The use of pre-post reading gain scores may permit the study of reading as a learning process rather than a final product. As the learners are systematically exposed to cloze technique, the learners' scores are expected to be higher than the scores they obtain in the pre-test before exposed to the cloze technique.\(^{32}\)

There is a need to motivate the learner to read the prescribed text in a classroom situation. Psycholinguists have pointed out that reading is a physical act which falls within the psychomotor domain in Bloom's Taxonomy of skills. It includes some element of cognitive domain also, for, otherwise it would be similar to barking at print. The reading process involve predicting and sampling based on the


existing redundancies in a text. It is necessary to help the learners develop recognizing, inferring and predictive strategies. As these strategies are likely to be successful only when the reader has some prior knowledge on the topic of the texts, the texts selected for our study contain a pre-reading orientation and of post-comprehension questions after the cloze task has been completed. The pre-reading orientation is carried out to motivate the learners to read the text, the post-comprehension read questions are asked to assess the understanding of the text after performing the cloze task.

The texts selected reflect the principle of redundancies so as to focus the learners' attention to the implied contextual cues in the form of synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy and collocations existing between words and grammatical relationships by pronouns, determiners etc., present in texts.

It is a well known fact that words and statements have to be understood in terms of their contextual 'value' and not in terms of their 'signification'. Cloze procedure enables the learners to extract or infer the value of the words from their use in a given context. As a reading process, cloze texts should reflect this ability also.
A good reader will have the ability to recognize and understand the use of grammatical items like the use of articles, prepositions, pronouns etc., the use of infinitive and gerundial structures, restrictive clauses, nominalisations, downtoners etc., in an integrated way in terms of their communicational function. In a text of random deleted cloze procedure grammar and vocabulary are integrated.

The texts taken up for our study are simplified/rephrased as the entry behaviour of the frustrational level group and instructional level group of learners was quite inadequate to encounter an unsimplified text. "A text which is authentic to native speakers will be interactionally inauthentic to others. The uses of such authentic texts must be pedagogic than natural".  

Modern educationists quite often insist on mind-engaging/problem-solving activity in classrooms. As cloze procedure involves the mind of the learner calling for his reading skills, it could also called a task-oriented activity.

As the random deletion cloze provides scope for a balanced distribution of functional and lexical words, this is adopted for our study. A rational deletion cloze may

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concentrate only on content words, which will be too difficult for learners hailing from rural schools/Tamil medium schools. If it concentrates only on grammatical words, classroom situations may not provide scope for variety of answers which lead to discussion. Hence the systematic random deleted cloze is adopted for our study.

For a native speaker, every fifth word deletion may not be so difficult unlike the ESL learner whose exposure to English is very limited. Hence the ratio ranges from 8th to 11th word taking into account the nature of the text, contextual cues implied in the text and redundancies.

Regarding scoring procedures, as the exact word scoring will be too difficult to the non-native speaker, the contextually appropriate word strategy is adopted so as to encourage very many answers for blanks and analysis. In this context, one has to remember that not all blanks will lead to variety of answers. This is especially true of grammatical words. It is obviously unnecessary to treat every deleted word in depth and detail. Content words generally facilitate a variety of answers which would enable the teacher to help the learner understand that all synonyms cannot be appropriate in all contexts.